

**THE MINISTRY OF
ALL BAPTIZED BELIEVERS**

THE MINISTRY OF ALL BAPTIZED BELIEVERS

RESOURCE MATERIALS
FOR THE CHURCHES' STUDY
IN THE AREA OF MINISTRY

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION - DEPARTMENT OF STUDIES
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FOREWORD

One of the functions stated in the LWF Constitution is to "develop fellowship and cooperation in study among Lutherans". Under its terms of reference, the Commission on Studies shall "provide ways in which the member churches can explore together the issues which confront them as they seek to proclaim the Gospel in the world."

The Commission on Studies has formulated the following theme, which is to govern the application of all criteria to the study and consultative programmes that the Department of Studies will undertake during the current period:

The church is sent by God in Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit - to embody its identity in community, and to equip the whole people of God, in order to minister to the whole world through witness and service (Eph. 4:11-15).

During the period from 1971 to 1977 the "Identity of the Church and Its Service to the Whole Human Being" was a pivotal study of the Commission and Department of Studies, in which 46 member churches participated. In 1978, the final volume of a related study by the former Commission entitled, *Lutheran Churches - Salt or Mirror of Society?* was published. During 1978, ongoing support was given to those churches that are continuing their ecclesiology self-studies. The Commission on Studies at its 1978 meeting, in response to a mandate from the Dar-es-Salaam Assembly, set a new priority in the continuation of the identity concern now with a more restricted and concentrated emphasis on ministry and worship as two of the areas where the identity of the church is embodied as the new community in Christ.

The Commission on Studies noted that a study on the ministry of the church is necessary for such reasons as:

- the question of ministry emerges as an important issue in connection with studies on worship;
- the need for more effective ministry in rapidly changing cultural contexts (cultural is used here in its broadest sense to include social, political, artistic, economic, etc. aspects);
- emerging concepts of participatory corporate worship;
- ecumenical studies on the church, the sacraments and the ministry, and the requirements of bilateral conversations;
- biblical, liturgical and theological studies over the past few decades;

- the role of women in everyday church life;
- a growing sensibility to how the experience of so-called marginal groups in societies minister to the church itself.

It is against this background that the Studies Commission and Department undertake a project of shared study with LWF member churches to assist them in clarifying and dealing with their problems of ministry, both theological and practical, and to enable the sharing of insights with one another among the churches.

The preparatory work concentrated on the concepts of and the relationship between the universal priesthood and the ordained ministry. During that stage relevant material coming from bilateral conversations of the LWF, the identity studies, World Council of Churches Faith and Order documents and Lutheran reactions to them, etc. were collected and summarized. In the meantime, an initial attempt was made to obtain information from the member churches by means of a circular letter of the Department of Studies (November 21, 1979) with regard to the preparation of a study on the ministry. In this connection, mention should also be made of the LWF Department of Communication's questionnaire on the ordination of women in Lutheran churches (October 1980).

The Rev. Karl Gervin of the Church of Norway was coopted by the Department of Studies to serve as a staff member in the area of its ministry programmes. He was assisted by a small working group, which met last February to draft a study paper. The draft was discussed and further revised by the Commission on Studies at its 1980 meeting.

The Studies Department records its special thanks to Karl Gervin as well as to Inge Klaas and Dorothea Millwood for the editing and the production of this booklet. We sincerely hope that its contents will be of help in your studies.

October 1980

Yoshiro Ishida
for the Department
of Studies

A. INTRODUCTION

THE MINISTRY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Christ sent his church, the people of God, into the world to proclaim salvation for all humankind.

"Proclamation is directed to the whole human being. The Scriptures describe what happens as a change from death to life, an incorporation into a community of brothers and sisters, and a way of living responsibly in the world."

"Responsible participation is possible when the people of God are determined by the Gospel through faith and repentance."¹

Proclamation includes a "variety of actions by which the church brings the good news to all people, declares to them the gracious will of God to gather a people through which the plenitude of His love can flow to all humankind"² .

Against this background, the wholeness in the mission of the church should be emphasized. Wholeness includes proclamation, service and community but in many churches (and in the LWF) there is a tendency of separating these elements. We need to develop a self-understanding according to which we corporately bring the whole gospel to the whole human being.

All members of the people of God participate in this mission, each according to the gifts he or she has received. This is what we understand by the *general* ministry of all baptized believers. Within this general ministry is set the *special* ministry of Word and sacrament which we call the Ministry, or the office of the Ministry.

Ministry is God's people in action with Jesus Christ at the centre. Through Word and sacrament he calls and enables his believers to proclaim and to practise reconciliation. This holy and comprehensive ministry would not be possible without the empowering of the Holy Spirit. So Christ's disciples are united to become his living and life-giving body - ministers offering themselves as a living sacrifice, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him.

THE BACKGROUND

Today, our churches are carrying out their ministry in a rapidly changing political, social and cultural world. This pressure constantly calls the churches to renewed and creative

study and experimentation in order to shape the kind of ministry that will be able to meet the needs of the world. Disillusionment with the church and its ministry by people who are deeply concerned with the needs of our society constitutes a permanent challenge to the ministry of the church and the forms it takes.

Whatever statement is made about the ministry, and however fundamental it may seem, it is already shaped by a particular confessional and contextual understanding of the ministry. The one ministry of the Church of Christ is always manifested in different and frequently not mutually recognized forms, structures and doctrines of the ministry. The ministry, like all life, is conditioned by history.

Different forms and concepts of ministry exist within the Lutheran churches. This could result in a fruitful interaction. However, there is often a need to encourage such studies and practices that might lead the churches to a more complete and effective understanding of its ministry.

The new experience and theological insights brought about by the ecumenical movement have helped to overcome narrow and particularistic perspectives. Accordingly, the new awareness of our common apostolic mission, in which all churches share, has led to a re-discovery of the ecumenical and universal dimension of the ministry of the whole people of God. Ecumenical dialogue about the ordained ministry has also helped to see more clearly the common tasks of the ordained ministry despite its different confessional forms of expression. Here the outlines of that one ministry of the Church of Christ begin to emerge in the multiplicity of its confessional realization.

Despite all these diversities and changes, Lutherans who participate in ecumenical dialogues are expected and asked to represent the Lutheran understanding of ministry, or at least basic lines of a common Lutheran understanding of ministry, which can serve as a framework and as terms of reference for the mutual study of specific questions. Indicating such basic lines should in no way exclude the possibility of revising and complementing them with the help of the results emerging from the study project.

Two preliminary conclusions can be drawn from these introductory considerations:

- a) The recognition of the fact that there are distinctively Lutheran forms of understanding and of structuring the ministry of the church and of relating it to the ministries of all baptized believers;

- b) the awareness that this ministry can no longer be studied and renewed in its different manifestations in isolation from the wider ecumenical context. This context serves as a reminder that there is basically only one ministry of the one Church of Christ.

WORSHIP

The LWF study project on worship³ has emphasized that baptism is the sacrament of salvation in which Christians share a common birth and together receive the Holy Spirit. United together in one body they worship together in faith, with all God's people on earth and in heaven. As the body of Christ its true identity is revealed and actualized as it participates in the Eucharist.

A Lutheran Agenda for Worship further develops how worship is also

- an occasion where the hope of overcoming barriers, oppression, inequalities and discrimination in society is realized in an anticipatory way;
- the eschatological hope celebrated and proclaimed as exposing all human hopes and ideological promises to be penultimate;
- the equipping of people for their every-day service as a realization of the gift of baptism in daily Christian obedience.

For the clergy, the corporate nature of the life in Christ suggests the concept of liturgical presidency: the pastoral role in worship is presiding over a participating assembly of baptized Christians. However, the corporate nature of the life in Christ also implies the involvement of the laity (inclusive of women and youth) in the planning and leadership of worship. The gifts of the Holy Spirit find expression in worship.

Ministry involves a dynamic tension between receptivity and activity. All of us are recipients of God's grace, through word and sacrament. But all of us are also called to act, sent forth to "proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people" - to live lives that are signs of God's coming reign. The church would benefit from a renewed study of how through worship we are equipped, enabled, encouraged and empowered for this mission and ministry in the world.

THE MINISTRY OF ALL BAPTIZED BELIEVERS AND THE SPECIAL MINISTRY

The ministry of the church is exercised by the whole people of God, and not only by those who have been ordained to the office of the ministry or called to special tasks within the church. A study of the ministry might well begin by considering how the whole baptized people of God - female and male, old and young, the un-schooled and the educated - are called to be ministers through the empowering event of their baptism. How does baptism become the ordination to the diverse ministries of the people of God?

Set within this priesthood of all baptized believers there is the special task of the office of the ministry. According to the Lutheran confessions (e.g. *Confessio Augustana*, Art. V), it is in order that we may obtain faith that the ministry of proclaiming the word and administering the sacraments was instituted. In *this* the practices of our churches concur.

The necessary interaction between the ministry of all baptized believers and the special ministry as well as their specific tasks, was also expressed in a recent study on Lutheran identity:

"With the Word to be proclaimed and the sacraments to be administered, the church's ministry is also divinely instituted and it is conferred through ordination. It is Christ himself who acts through this office and its functions. There is freedom in the concrete formation and organization of this office as well as in the shaping of the church's order and forms of worship. This is not a freedom of indifference, but a freedom for responsible structuring, subject to the criterion whether they serve the mission and unity of the church."⁴

In the same study it is stated that

"All those reconciled in Christ are God's children, have equal access to God and may intercede for each other before God. They also participate in the apostolic commission to bear witness to the gospel in word and life.

This does not, however, make the office of the church's public ministry superfluous, a mere question of order, or simply a creature of the congregation. The particular office of the ordained ministry of the church cannot be derived from the priesthood of all believers. It stands both within the congregation and under and with the Word of God, over against it. Yet the local church has both the right and the duty to provide for the appointment

of ministers and to be responsible with the whole church for the conduct of their ministry."⁵

This does imply a "functional" as well as an "instituted" understanding of the ministry. Functional in that it is strictly understood as a service and not as a status. It serves the public, responsible proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. Through this it serves the upbuilding of a Christian community. This is done by way of many different activities, yet proclamation and administration of the sacraments are at the centre of these activities. This is done in close collaboration with the ministry of Christian lay people. The final responsibility and accountability, however, rests with the special ministry.

The ministry is instituted in so far as it is not seen as an arrangement for practical purposes or the delegated leader of a given community. Rather, it is divinely instituted as a necessary instrument by which Word and sacraments are served. From this perspective, the ministry is essential for the church because Word and sacraments are essential.

This combination of a "functional" and an "instituted" character is expressed in ordination. God is the real ordinator and the church calls and commissions a person to this particular ministry. There is no theological dichotomy between the general ministry and the ordained ministry. Both are closely interrelated but cannot be confused.

SETTING APART, CALLING AND ORDINATION

In most cases a vital aspect of the setting apart of the special ministry is an act of initiation and consecration.

Most churches now have different kinds of pastors, including pastors with responsibility outside the normal parish structure. However, more and more churches also have found it useful to call other workers whose special ministries partly overlap with the mandate of the pastor. There is a need to define more clearly and comprehensively the mandates of these ministries and the different requirements for them.

Most churches distinguish between an ordination to the pastor's office and a commissioning to other types of special ministry. A study of these rites should be closely linked with an understanding of the nature and function of the church. However, both content and application of ordination and commissioning vary significantly. The churches would therefore benefit from a study of the nature of ordination and commissioning to bring out as clearly as possible the meaning of these acts.

In most churches there have been changes in the background, calling, training and vocational track of pastors and other set-apart ministries in recent years. Previously candidates were often recruited from the best candidates among the church workers or those who have an active background in the church.

New situations have to be dealt with under the present conditions where many candidates for the special ministries go through seminary or other training without a prior outer call from the church, and with little experience of church life and work. There is a need to develop new selection mechanisms for candidates to the special ministries.

LEADERSHIP

In many churches "decision-making" appears to proceed from the top downwards, with little accountability to the church membership (the general ministry) as a whole. Organizational hierarchies have developed. The problem of "clergy-centredness" also exists in many churches with or without serious attendant tensions between clergy and laity.

On the local level this can take the form of conflicts among the set-apart ministries, or between these and representative bodies like a parish council. Focussing on the decision-making process can also lead to a certain disagreement on how the power of the keys should be administered, e.g., in relation to the sacraments and other rites.

On the other hand, many pastors feel bewildered or frustrated because of the amount of work expected from them and because their area of work is being infringed upon by other set-apart ministries. These specialized ministries often suffer from want of a clear mandate with natural limits, and of autonomy within this area. There seems to be a danger that the general practice of the church in many cases is developing ahead of theological reflection. Special attention should be given to the different models employed in the differentiation of set-apart ministries - and to how to demonstrate that the various types of leadership and interaction among these ministries are vital parts of the very nature of the church and its calling.

B. GUIDELINES TO THE SELF-STUDIES

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This introduction to the study programme is not a complete treatment of the subject where all problems are addressed and solved. It is clear that situations in the churches vary, and that no single solution can be prescribed for all. If this paper is to assist the churches it must rather stimulate creativity and study in the churches themselves by suggesting goals to be considered and, perhaps, worked toward. Merely to describe conditions as they exist at present could not provide such a stimulus. This paper, then, is not a conclusion; it is a beginning.

The method employed in the programme should be *both deductive and inductive*. It must involve a careful study of the witness of the New Testament and the Lutheran confessions. At the same time it must take into consideration new needs in the everyday life of the church in a *rapidly changing world*.

Special attention should also be given to the material coming from *ecumenical encounters*. Efforts should be made to evaluate and integrate insights gained through the ecumenical dialogues.

It is also important that the project on the ministry is linked with the *other LWF studies* on ecclesiology, identity and worship (see p.9 on the study on worship and p.128 on the identity studies).

The self-studies could take place on local or regional levels, and it is important that *the whole general ministry* is enabled to take an active part. The studies could take the form of collation of findings, analysis of documentation, sharing of insights and stimulating experiments.

It is of special importance that attention is given to how the theology and theory is or is not reflected in *the actual practice* of the various churches. Care should be taken to facilitate a later *sharing* of the insights gained with the other churches and the LWF.

WORSHIP

What reason can be given for including all the set-apart ministries in the worship in a visible way? What is it in our ministry in worship that can or cannot involve both lay and ordained? Men and women?

Questions also arise in connection with certain worship practices.

- If a distinction is maintained between ordination and commissioning, what necessary implications will this have when it comes to the administration of the sacraments?
- Why do most churches use different forms of benediction depending on whether it is given by an ordained or a non-ordained person?
- When a lay person leads a service, what dress is appropriate in relation to the one worn by the pastor?
- Can the set-apart ministries use the altar for other functions than celebrating the Eucharist?
- Can a lay person preach in the church itself? From the pulpit?
- How could we incorporate into worship a more intentional act of commissioning the people of God to be ministers in the everyday world?

THE MINISTRY OF ALL BAPTIZED BELIEVERS

God is determined to care perpetually for what he has created. Through baptism he calls and enables persons to participate in this perpetual care. Ministry is this co-enabling of the baptized as the stewards of God's mysteries. Ministry belongs to the whole people of God.

- To what extent are the ministries fulfilling this function in the church?
- What concrete forms should or could the ministries take?

Special attention should be given to how the New Testament testifies to the empowering of every Christian through the many and varied gifts of the Holy Spirit.

- How can ministry in all its divers functions reflect the inclusiveness of the church?

God's Spirit was poured out at Pentecost on all his sons and daughters.

- How can a church that takes the gifts of the Spirit seriously in our day ensure that living out the gifts of the Spirit is not denied to any member of the body of the baptized?

A comparison between the various catalogues of gifts of the New Testament could be a study project in itself.

- To what extent are similar patterns functioning in the local churches today?

Because in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, these distinctions cannot in themselves determine who shall fulfil ministry functions.

- How do distinctions like age, sex, educational qualifications and social status hinder the inclusiveness of the church's ministries?
- Are the images of ministry truly inclusive and do the models of ministry promote this inclusiveness?

In addition to the Word and sacrament ministry, Lutherans have also emphasized ministries that heal, nurture, serve - and reconcile persons to God and to one another, and to the situations they find themselves in. We affirm the biblical mandate and the continuing need for these dimensions of ministry. We ask how effectively these pastoral functions are being carried out in the light of the changing identities and needs of women and other oppressed persons. Furthermore, a textual study of ministry will show how the biblical view of ministry, as evidenced by the prophets and the ministry of Jesus, also emphasizes transformation, sanctification and empowerment. Ministry is challenge, at times even confrontation.

- How might these dimensions be further developed and emphasized in the life of the church?

Christian love implies a particular sensitivity to human needs. The needy, the poor, those who are suffering, the oppressed are clearly people of God's preference and of Jesus' liberating identification. The word sensitivity, as used here, still denotes a distance. There is a necessity to stress the active solidarity and identification with the needy and oppressed.

- How can this necessary change be brought about - in preaching, through new structures, and a change in life styles?

Mission and service are often carried out in such a way that it appears as if all responsibilities were concentrated in the pastoral office. Historically understood lay movements have often provided a counterweight.

- Could this tension in many churches be overcome by a renewed understanding of how the charismatic gifts function in the congregation - which makes room for the often unexpected work of the Holy Spirit?

In a growing number of churches women and men serve as co-equal ministers, dividing ministry functions according to their gifts rather than their sex.

- How might this pattern be (further) applied in your church?
- How might the presence of female clergy change our models and images of ministry?
- If the church's ministry were truly inclusive, what kind of prophetic witness might this have for the wider society?
- How might it be a sign of overcoming differences of sex, social class, race and age?

Investigations have revealed a discrepancy between the holders of set-apart ministries and others, as to what contributes to and what detracts from effective Christian ministries. A local survey could be of valuable help in determining priorities and criteria for a more faithful and effective ministry.

SETTING APART, CALLING AND ORDINATION

- What is the basic difference between commissioning and ordination, the division of labour between the ordained and the commissioned?
- Does a basic difference between them necessitate a distinction?
- What intrinsic reasons are given for the distinction between the ordination to some ministries and a commission to others?
- Could a new adequate and inclusive term be found for all categories?
- What is conferred in these acts that will equip the set-apart ministries to serve as servants of Christ and as enablers of the general ministry?
- The existence of part-time ministries and ministries to special groups raises the question of whether ordination and commissioning can only take place in the case of a full and life-long vocation or in the case of parish work.
- Are there circumstances where a practice of re-ordination is appropriate?
- What elements should the ordination and commissioning services contain?
- Who should take active part in the actual ordaining or commissioning - and how could the calling both of Christ and the general ministry be more clearly manifested?

A study of ordination and commissioning should also include a consideration of the criteria for these acts.

- Is there a danger that theoretical education or formal background carry too much weight over spiritual maturity and leadership abilities?

The practices concerning the ordination or commissioning of women vary considerably from church to church. It is important that this issue is dealt with not primarily as a special case of ordination, but as arising out of the ministry of the whole people of God.

- What have been the experiences of the churches that ordain or commission women?
- What were the experiences of the women themselves?
- Does a distinction between ordaining and commissioning of women follow with necessity from the nature and form of Christ's calling and mandate to the church?
- How does the ordination of women affect the status and the participation of lay women in the church?
- Are ordained women encouraged to follow established patterns of ministry?
- Are they stimulated to create new forms of ministry?
- How would you describe the contribution of their ministry to the life of your church?

There is also disagreement on these issues within many churches.

- What regulations and models of ministry have been developed in your church against this background to enable the church to live with its differences so as to carry forth Christ's calling and mandate?

EDUCATION

Related to the various topics discussed above is the area of theological education.

- Does your church have training programmes enabling all the people of God to participate responsibly in the life, work and mission of the church, suited to and reflecting a diversity of abilities and gifts?
- To what extent do your schools and other types of training prepare the people to be open to different possibilities for life, work, mission and service in the church and in society?

Training the people of God should be oriented toward cooperation, not domination.

- What images and concepts of ministry are being used by teachers and in the educational material at all levels, and especially in the seminaries?

A test case is how education promotes or discourages female participation in different ministries. More and more women enter theological education and many churches are somewhat at a loss what to do with them. The result is frequently that they get jobs not adequate to their skills and education.

Another series of questions concern attitudes and structures transmitted through ministerial training.

- What is the prevailing position in e.g. seminaries in terms of leadership style? Do the students learn a more democratic and participatory way of decision-making and leading?

LEADERSHIP

As a step towards realizing more fully the theory of an inclusive ministry, it might be useful for a local study project to investigate to what extent structures of ministry have tended to reflect and reinforce patterns of hierarchy, status, and authority that are prevalent in the wider society of which the church is part.

- What impact did the missionary period itself have?
- How might "the universal priesthood of the baptized" be more centrally manifested at the core of the Lutheran practice of ministry?

A number of problems need attention under this heading. We therefore suggest

- a survey and an evaluation of how decision-making is actually taking place in the various churches, and of the way in which authoritative teaching is carried out;
- an analysis of procedures and requirements for registration on clergy rosters;
- a study of how a strong hierarchy will function differently in an established church and during a missionary or unstable period - and relating this to the present-day situation of the local churches;
- a study of the shepherd image and more organic or democratic forms of leadership, to make clear whether certain structures of leadership are vital for or incompatible with the nature of the church;
- an investigation into whether certain leadership structures of the church are taken over from a missionary period or

from the socio-political environment without being a necessary part of the structure of the church;

- an examination of the office of the bishop or president in the Lutheran churches to compare and define the functions of this special ministry. Is the difference or change in terminology significant?
- an exploration of how the structures which contribute to proclamation can be open for change and replacement of new structures to transmit proclamation in the life, mission and service of the church in the congregation and in society;
- a study of how ecumenical consensus can be realized through ecclesiastical ministry understood as ministry of unity.

FURTHER ASPECTS OF SET-APART MINISTRIES THAT MIGHT REQUIRE ATTENTION REGARDING THE PRACTICE OF SOME LOCAL CHURCHES

1. In some countries questions arise in connection with selection of candidates to the ministry:
 - a) The older generation was recruited from the best candidates among the evangelists and teacher-preachers, and given theological education for a certain period of time.
 - b) Among the younger generation most are without previous experience in church work, younger in years and entering the seminary without strict selection, based upon high school diplomas.
- How should this selection and preparation be carried out?
2. Regarding the concept of the minister there are certain key issues:
 - the holiness of the office of the minister as servant of the congregation
 - example of a good moral life
 - obedience to church leaders
- How vital are these aspects to the very nature of ministry?
3. The traditional status of a pastor raises the question of social and other types of status:

- pastors continue to be addressed with honorific titles, such as "Abah", "Mana", "shikamoo", etc., and are seen as "Taan", "Bwana"
- there is a distance between pastors and lay persons
- homage is paid in an excessive and exaggerated way to pastors and especially to church leaders (bishops)
- the pastor is regarded as a person who knows best and is the person to be consulted on almost all problems.

4. Different types of offices in the ministry

Besides the ordained pastors we find on the local congregation level

- evangelists or teachers-preachers
- Bible women or parish workers
- deacons or deaconesses
- elders
- etc.

All these people are commissioned through special commissioning church rites in the church service.

- How to differentiate and distribute responsibilities?

5. Finally:

- Is it impossible or to be encouraged that the pastor join a political party, parliament, or serve at the same time as a civil servant?

N O T E S

¹ *The Identity of the Church and Its Service to the Whole Human Being*, Final Volume II (Geneva, Lutheran World Federation, 1977), pp. 236 and 109.

² *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³ *A Lutheran Agenda for Worship* (Geneva, Lutheran World Federation, 1979).

⁴ *Lutheran Identity* (Strasbourg, Institute for Ecumenical Research, 1977), p. 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

C. SELECTED DOCUMENTATION

The following selection of recent statements on ministry is intended to facilitate and stimulate the self-studies.

I. LUTHERAN STATEMENTS

For quite some time only few (or non-representative) Lutheran statements on the nature and the forms of ministry have been made. In the course of the last decades, however, several statements were made that call for our attention.

The first is a statement from the Lutheran Council in the USA of 1974 entitled "The Ministry of the Church: A Lutheran Understanding".

Then follows the 1977 statement of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) dealing with ministry in the ecumenical context (German only).

Next is "A Study of Ministry, 1980", published in the spring of 1980 by the Division for Professional Leadership of the Lutheran Church in America. Space does not permit a complete reproduction of the whole 21-page document. Not included are the sections entitled "Applying the Understandings of Ministry", "Other Issues Related to Ordained Ministers" and the recommendations at the end.

Finally, there is a very recent document from Latin America. In August 1980, representatives of the majority of Latin American countries met in Bogotá for a workshop on ministry and ordination. The workshop formulated a statement and a number of recommendations that were passed on to the subsequent Sixth Lutheran Latin American Congress. This Congress, meeting from August 17 to 23 in Bogotá, received them and referred them to the bodies concerned for appropriate action.

Statement on Ministry of the
Lutheran Council in the USA
of 1974:

"The Ministry of the Church:
A Lutheran Understanding"

(Available from Division of Theological Studies, Lutheran
Council in the USA, 360 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y.
10010)

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH:

A LUTHERAN UNDERSTANDING

The following document was adopted in March 1974 by the standing committee of the Division of Theological Studies, Lutheran Council in the USA, in response to a referral from the council's Executive Committee to study ordination and the ministry, and as a contribution to further study in the churches of issues relating to the church and the office of the ministry. The Executive Committee subsequently transmitted the document to the presidents of the participating church bodies, not as a final position paper of the council or the churches, but as a contribution to further study of this important subject.

PREFACE

Several years ago the National Lutheran Council received a request from the American Lutheran Church to study ministry and ordination. In 1967 the Division of Theological Studies of the Lutheran Council in the USA officially accepted this assignment. Since the division was cognizant of the fact that the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and other Christian churches and groups had been or were involved in studies on the ministry, it endeavored to avail itself of this work, serve as a liaison and also produce a statement of value to all Lutherans.

Early in this process an exhaustive comparison was made of all the official documents of the three Lutheran church bodies which deal with the ministry. This research was reviewed by a study committee of the division, a committee which has undergone several changes of personnel. Attention was given to other statements on ministry, including those produced in ecumenical dialogue.¹ A number of consultants of various backgrounds and expertise were appointed. Study papers were commissioned and presented at a series of consultations.² Late in 1971 drafting of a statement was begun. During the spring of 1972 the draft text was submitted to thorough scrutiny by the study committee. It was then revised and sent to about 20 consultants for their comments. In addition, the document has been shared with groups of theological professors, with the district/synod presidents, with representatives of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship and with representatives designated by the church body presidents. The study committee has continued to reexamine and revise the statement in light of all reactions.

One of the conclusions reached at an early stage of the study was that, given the nature of the original request,

a statement on the ministry must be produced that would be of practical assistance, especially to the jurisdictional unit presidents as they face the responsibility of their office. Such questions as the nature of ordination, requirements for retention on clergy rosters and specialized ministries must be discussed. It has been precisely in these areas that Lutheranism has lacked clear answers.

Thus the statement attempts to study the Lutheran doctrine of the ministry to see how it may be applied in the churches to these unresolved issues. As such, the document is more descriptive than prescriptive. The statement enjoys no official status within any one of the three Lutheran churches.

To provide counsel, the document has sought to draw on the resources of Lutheranism and not be innovative. Although a new analogy has been utilized to encompass more adequately new realities, a novel doctrine of the Lutheran ministry is not being projected. It may be helpful to keep in mind that an analogy describes a partial similarity between two things. Parallels, for example, between baptism and the analogy employed here for ordination and installation should not be too strictly drawn, nor should the covenant concept be interpreted as parallel at all points to the biblical use of covenant.

The framers of the statement are aware that some Lutherans have viewed the office of the ministry from the perspective of its function among the people of God; others have seen it from the perspective of its establishment by God (see Augsburg Confession, Article V). The intention of this statement is to retain both of these emphases, thereby reaffirming the biblical and confessional basis of a doctrine of the ministry.

Because the statement has a practical purpose, efforts have been made to create a relatively brief document without elaborate documentation from Scripture, the Confessions or other material.

MINISTRY OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD

Through baptism, God calls individuals into His people. Baptism becomes the initial significant moment (*kairos*) of an ongoing relationship of faith into which God places every Christian - a moment with past, present and future implications.

Baptism is inseparably tied to the past, to the gracious self-giving death of Christ for us. The present dimension of baptism is seen in the forgiveness of sins, acceptance

by God and newness of life in the Spirit. The future is opened up by God's promise of continued love. Thus in baptism God establishes a covenant in which Christians live out their entire lives.

Through baptism, God also sends the Christian into a ministry which can take a variety of forms and functions, depending upon the gifts entrusted by God, the particular role in family and society and the demands of a changing future. Open to God's future and sent by Him, each Christian, as a member of the pilgrim church, ventures forth in faith to minister.

Therefore, ministry is inherent in the people of God. This assertion implies several points of crucial importance.

First, all such ministry has its origin in Jesus Christ, who has given each member of the whole people of God this task and privilege.

Second, ministry is an essential feature of the church, tied inseparably to God's people. Without ministering, the people of God could not be obedient to their Lord.

Third, ministry is to be considered in the context of the communal relationship (*koinonia*) of the church for it has been bestowed by the Lord upon the people of God, not merely upon a collection of individuals.

Fourth, although the ministry of God's people is most intimately united with the forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption effected by Jesus Christ, a distinction should be maintained between the mission of Christ as an unrepeatable, authenticating occurrence and the commission of Christ to all of His people to minister to the world in every age. The decisive characteristics of the church's message and life which the people of God cannot alter, ignore or regard as their accomplishment lie in a first-century phenomenon. There is a difference between what Christ has done and what the people of God now do. Yet the message and life of God's people must always be rooted in the entire Christ event.

This ministry of God's people, grounded in the saving work of Christ, is exercised in worship, witness, service and suffering. In all of these functions of ministry the people of God act not only as a group of individuals but as a true *koinonia* which declares the news of reconciliation in Christ and exemplifies the ministry of reconciliation. The love of God is manifested in deeds of love performed by God's people. By proclaiming the Word of God and applying it with prophetic boldness to contemporary needs, this fellowship aids the

world to comprehend the purpose of God as well as the genuine meaning of human existence. Through opposition to evil, oppression and injustice against the poor and disinherited, the people of God authenticate their message.

As the church in the world, the people of God worship the triune God and in this continual act give expression to their praise and obedience to God, recalling His acts of redemption and the promise of His presence. They hear a word of judgment but also the message of the cross and resurrection. They are reminded of their need of the loving God and attempt to interpret the will of God in Christ to their situation.

The people of God give witness, as Christ has been the faithful witness to His Father, by their very existence as a gathered worshipping people, by the proclamation of Christ's Gospel and by the application of that Gospel to the circumstances and issues of the present day.

The people of God serve in the world, not only through worship and witness but also by caring for the hungry, the poor, the sick and the distressed. In this function, God's people assert His sovereign lordship and proclaim His love for the world.

The people of God also suffer in this world. Such suffering should be expected and may occur through persecution or through identification with the underprivileged or despised. In endurance without malice or self-pity, God's people have the opportunity to disclose God's love to all the world as they, like their Lord, agonize for human beings.

This ministry, inherent in the people of God by virtue of Christ's saving work, is a dynamic continuum, initiated by baptism and received by faith, in which God's calling and sending are repeatedly experienced.

THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

Consideration must be given to the ordained ministry which involves only some of the people of God. Certain affinities exist between the ministry of the whole people of God and the office of the ordained ministry. The ordained person lives within the same basic continuity as all Christians, the continuity with past, present and future dimensions initiated by baptism. Living within this context he/she has the conviction that God has called him/her not only to the ministry of the whole people of God but also to the ordained ministry.

This ordained ministry is a part of the people of God, united with them in the task of mission and standing with them beneath the judgment and grace of God. In another sense the ordained ministry stands on behalf of Christ over against the people of God, entrusted with the exposition of the Word of God, the administration of the sacraments and the general spiritual oversight of the church.

The authority of this ordained ministry, as that of the ministry of all God's people, proceeds from the Lord of the church Himself. It is God who instituted the office of the ministry (Augsburg Confession V) and who has continued to call and send His servants to fill it (Augsburg Confession XIV). The most common form of ordained ministry is that of servant of the Word and sacraments in a local congregation. This ordained ministry, however, relates also to areas other than the parish setting. Persons, for example, who are called to exercise leadership or oversight or who are called to elucidate and interpret the mission and message of the church are properly a part of the ordained ministry.

The Christian strives in personal life and by professional training to prepare for the calling to the ordained ministry. Normally such training includes at least four years of college and three years of theological seminary plus one year of internship, during which the individual remains in close touch with the appropriate officials of the church for counsel and guidance. During and at the close of formal education, the person is examined to determine belief, personal fitness and professional competence. Upon favorable judgment in this examination and when God through the church calls and sends to a specific field of labor, the person is ordained by the church.

Ordination is a *kairos* on the continuum of the ordained ministry with significant liturgical aspects. Like baptism, this rite has past, present and future dimensions. Ordination recognizes God's initial calling into the ordained ministry, all previous training and personal endowments. It is a certification that what was believed, lived and learned prior to ordination prepares the individual for this ministry. Ordination marks the establishment of a covenant. The ordained pledges to God and His church to discharge the office of the ordained ministry faithfully. The church as the community of the faithful promises its support and in response to God's promise confidently prays for the bestowal of the Holy Spirit for the performance of this office.

This covenant relationship between ordinand, church and God initiates an unfolding process. Ordinand, church and God

have all made commitments to be kept. The ordinand is faithfully to administer the office of the ordained ministry as a trust from the Lord of the church and in this challenging task has the assurance of God's promises and the church's prayers. This means that the ordained minister will lead a personal life commensurate with that of the committed Christian and will continue professional training. The church has vowed its support and prayers.

Ordination is thus the public act whereby the church, with prayer and the laying on of hands, accepts an individual into its ordained ministry and entrusts the responsibilities of fulfilling the functions of the office of this ministry.³ God, whose promises never fail, has given the assurance of His presence and guidance. The continuation of the ordinand's ministry depends upon God's calling and sending and upon the minister's faithfulness.

"To call" and "to send" is language which the church has traditionally employed with reference to the ordained ministry. "To call" is the language which the established congregation or agency employs to describe its action in asking someone to carry out a specific function of the ministry. "To send" is language of the missionary church and expresses the conviction that if a certain work needs to be done, the church has the right and indeed the obligation to send someone to do it. Ordination presupposes the individual's acceptance of the church's calling and sending action. Installation celebrates the beginning of the specific ministry to which the individual has been called and sent.

In the unfolding process of the ordained ministry, ordination is followed by the *kairos* of installation. Installation makes specific the generalities of ordination. As ordination marks a covenant between ordinand, church and God, installation marks a mutual agreement between ordained minister, congregation (agency, board or institution of the church) and God. Installation is comparable to baptism and ordination in having past, present and future dimensions. It brings together all that has occurred on this continuum up to installation, including the *kairos* of ordination; viz., belief, personal character and training. The minister promises to God and to the specific congregation (agency, board or institution of the church) to perform the functions of this office faithfully. The calling body undertakes to support the minister in this office (normally including the means of livelihood), pledges its obedience to the Lord and entreats the Holy Spirit to bestow all needful gifts for this specific ministry. Installation also has implications for the future. The minister and the calling body have both made commitments as in ordination. Installation is the beginning of a relationship in which these commitments are

lived out together in faith. The continua of most ordained ministers are marked by several *kairoi* of installations as the calling and sending of God lead them into different positions within the church.

As long as a minister and a calling body continue in the covenant of installation, it remains in effect. It may, however, be established for a mutually agreeable term, or either or both of the parties may terminate this mutual agreement. Usually this is done when a minister resigns the specific call to accept a new assignment in response to God's calling and sending. Under certain circumstances, however, the calling body may conclude the covenant into which it had entered. In either case the covenant of installation into a specific field is ended although the covenant of ordination may continue.

Ordination has been seen as a *kairos* in the unfolding process of the ordained ministry where a covenant relationship has been established, placing one in an office and entailing certain functions. In this mutual agreement there is no indelible character given to distinguish clergy from laity. This raises the question of tenure in regard to the ordained ministry. Normally ordination is considered as a *kairos* in an unfolding process that will continue for the duration of a person's life. However, just as an individual freely responds to God's calling and sending and enters the continuum of the ordained ministry, a person may leave this continuum for various reasons. Then, indeed, by ceasing to function as an ordained minister, the person in effect relinquishes that office. Such a person does not cease to participate in the ministry of the whole people of God by this action, but the relationship established by ordination is dissolved.

Then too the church retains the right to remove a person from the continuum of the ordained ministry for inability to serve or for disciplinary reasons.

The question must also be raised about the place of an ordained person who resigns from a specific call and accepts no other. The fact that such a person does not accept another call could lead to the conclusion that the individual does not wish to remain in the continuum of the ordained ministry. The church through appropriate channels should ascertain the reasons why a minister declines other calls and should offer counseling and assistance to aid in a choice of vocation. If the church or minister believes that God's calling and sending are no longer present, the minister leaves the ordained ministry. Such action need carry with it no negative connotations but may merely recognize a new vocational decision.⁴ If three

years have elapsed, during which the church has offered its counsel and concern, without the receipt and acceptance of a call by the minister, the name of the person should no longer be included on the roster of ordained ministers. This period of time may appear to be arbitrary, but it has shown itself in practice to provide ample opportunity under most conditions for an individual with the guidance of the church to receive and accept a specific call in the ordained ministry. A shorter period may force undue haste; a longer time, a prolongation of a less than ideal situation.

When an individual resigns from the ordained ministry and later desires to return to this continuum because of a sense of God's calling and sending, an examination of the individual's belief, personal endowments and training has to be conducted once again, and there must be God's calling and sending to a specific field of labor in the church. Then the covenant between individual, church and God would be reestablished; i.e., the person would once again enter the continuum of the ordained ministry. All the past, present and future dimensions of the earlier ordination would be present. The return to the ordained ministry with reaffirmation of ordination vows and installation into a specific field of labor should be marked by an appropriate liturgical rite.⁵

When someone ordained in a Christian church of a different confession wishes to enter the Lutheran ministry, subscription to the Lutheran Confessions will be required. The church in public will recognize this confessional subscription and pledge its support for this ministry.

COMMISSIONED MINISTRIES

There are those areas of responsibilities or functions within the ministry of the church which are distinct from the ministry of the whole people of God or from the ordained ministry. In the past many of these have been described as specialized, auxiliary or service ministries, as distinguished from the ordained ministry. The differences between these categories have often been arbitrary and artificial. It is suggested here that a distinction be made between ordained and commissioned ministries. The decision of the church whether to ordain or commission is determined by the functional character of the particular ministries. Clarity of description of function is the responsibility of the calling agency, board or congregation. Continuing consultation among judicatory presidents will be necessary to achieve consistency in practice.

The distinction between commissioned ministry and the ministry of the whole people of God will be determined by

whether the church desires to have this form of public ministry and is willing to exercise jurisdiction over it. The commissioned minister will be called to public ministry by the church and be under its control and direction. The lay Christian, exercising his or her ministry in the world, is not called by the church to public service, nor is such a person under the same control and direction. The ministry of the whole people of God is not of lesser significance, value or importance than commissioned ministry or ordained ministry, but it is different in function and public character and in the supervision which the church exercises over it.

In examining commissioned ministries, the model of the continuum will again be employed. The person on the continuum of the commissioned ministry lives within the same basic continuity as all Christians, the continuity with past, present and future dimensions initiated by baptism. At some stage in life, the Christian may experience God's calling to a particular ministry of service. This ministry could take a variety of forms; examples could include counselors, teachers and social workers.

Depending upon the type of ministry envisioned, professional training in fields such as psychology, education or social work may be required. Seminary education may well be a part of the preparation. During this period the individual remains in close touch with the appropriate officials of the church for counsel and guidance. Upon the successful completion of preparation and examination of belief, personal fitness and training, the church may commission the individual to a specific field of labor under God's calling and sending. Commissioning is a *kairos* on the continuum of this ministry. It too has a past, present and future. Commissioning is a certification by the church that what the individual has believed, lived and learned prepares him for this ministry. With regard to the present, commissioning is the *kairos* of the covenant when the person pledges to God and His church to fulfill this ministry faithfully, when the church vows its support, invokes the Holy Spirit and accepts the individual as a member of this ministry. As in the case of ordination, future implications are present for the commissioned person, the church and God. The person will lead an upright life, maintain and grow in professional skill. Support and guidance will come from God and the church.

The next *kairos* on the continuum of commissioned ministry would be that of installation. The same type of covenant would be established between the one installed, the congregation (agency, board or institution of the church) and God, with past, present and future implications, as is

established with a pastor at his/her installation. The difference would be in the type of ministry.

The same observation made about the tenure of the ordained ministry and the three-year period without a specific field of labor and covenant of installation are appropriate to the commissioned ministry. It could be expected that the continuum of the commissioned ministry would be marked by several *kairoi* of installation in the course of one's life.

Certain responsibilities, such as those given to an officer in a local congregation, a member of a synodical board, a delegate to a convention of the church, could be fulfilled by any baptized Christian and would not have the character of the commissioned ministry.

Provision also must be made for the individual freely to leave the continuum of the commissioned ministry, just as in the case of the ordained ministry, or for the church to remove a person for incapacity or disciplinary reasons.

A distinction must be kept between the ordained ministry and commissioned ministry. This distinction is not one of status or honor but of function. The church legitimately recognizes the importance of both ministries. Therefore, neither ordained nor commissioned ministry is to be considered superior to the other. They are parallel, but their tasks are different. Any individual with proper qualifications under God's calling and sending can leave the commissioned ministry and enter the ordained ministry. Entrance to the continuum would then be by ordination. Similarly, someone in the ordained ministry may voluntarily resign his/her specific call and, with the necessary training and call, enter the commissioned ministry by the rite of commissioning.

The ministry of the church, in its manifold functions, is a gift of the Holy Spirit, entrusted to us in order that forgiveness through Christ and righteousness before God might be obtained.

CRITERIA

In order to demonstrate how the principles contained in the preceding section might be applied, a series of questions has been provided. Rather than offering "solutions" these questions should guide officials in applying the appropriate criteria.

Some suggested questions for deciding individual cases would be:

1. Has the church decided that this work is part of the mission of the church?
2. Does the church wish to call or send a person to this work on its behalf and with its support? By this it is understood that the church assures itself that adequate funding is available either through its own structure or externally.
3. If so, does the church provide an arrangement which includes accountability to the church, adequate pastoral and professional supervision and evaluation and a significant relationship with a worshipping community?
4. Does the regular function to which the person is called or sent by the church include some form of public proclamation of the Word of God, some form of leadership and oversight in the church and some form of elucidation and interpretation of the message of the church? The term "public" here is not in opposition to "private" but refers to proclamation on behalf of the church.

If only the answer to question one is in the affirmative, the Christian ministers as a member of the whole people of God.

If the answers to all four questions are in the affirmative, the Christian ministers as a member of the ordained ministry.

If the answers to the first three questions are in the affirmative, the Christian ministers as a member of the commissioned ministry.

NOTES

- 1 For example, *Faith and Order Findings, Montreal, 1963* (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1963); *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV: Eucharist and Ministry* (USA National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, New York City and Washington, 1970); "The Ordained Ministry in Ecumenical Perspective," *Study Encounter*, 1972 (Vol. VIII, No. 4).
- 2 The supportive documents of basic research for this study are housed at the Lutheran Council in the USA ... and include studies on ministry in the New Testament and the Lutheran Confessions, in ecumenical work and within the three participating Lutheran bodies.
- 3 The rite does not bestow a higher status upon the person ordained. He/she remains a servant of the Gospel and a member of the ministering community. Nor does ordination effect any ontological change in the ordinand. He/she remains a redeemed sinner, but with special responsibilities for the service of God among His people. If "status" is used in the discussion, it should be understood only in its literal sense, "placement in an office."
- 4 Perhaps a liturgical rite to mark a person's departure from the ordained ministry would be appropriate for such occasions.
- 5 The logic of this position would call for a repetition of ordination, although this has not generally been Lutheran practice.

Statement on Ministry of the
United Evangelical Lutheran
Church of Germany (VELKD)
of 1977:
"Das Amt im ökumenischen Kontext"

(Reprinted in *Ökumenische Rundschau*, Vol. 27, No. 1, January
1978, pp. 94ff.)

Das Amt im ökumenischen Kontext

Stellungnahme des Ökumenischen Studienausschusses
der VELKD und des DNK/LWB

Der Ökumenische Studienausschuß der Vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Deutschlands und des Deutschen Nationalkomitees des Lutherischen Weltbundes hat im Auftrag der Kirchenleitung — neben anderen Aufgaben — in den Jahren 1973—77 die Fragen des Amtes in der ökumenischen Diskussion als Langzeitstudie aufgrund von zahlreichen Referaten mit anschließender Aussprache behandelt und dazu folgende Stellungnahme beschlossen; er hat jedoch die Absicht, an einigen Fragen weiterzuarbeiten. Die Stellungnahme ist von der Kirchenleitung am 26. 5. 1977 entgegengenommen worden. Sie wird in naher Zukunft zusammen mit den wesentlichen, ihr zugrundeliegenden Referaten veröffentlicht werden.

I. Vorwort

1. Der gegenwärtige Stand der ökumenischen Gespräche macht eine Auseinandersetzung unserer Kirche mit der Frage einer gegenseitigen Anerkennung kirchlicher Ämter unausweichlich. Es zeigt sich nämlich, daß alle multilateralen und bilateralen Gespräche über Interkommunion, Interzelebration und Reordination immer wieder auf das fundamentale Problem des Amtes und seiner Geltung hinführen.

2. Diese Aufgabe kommt in einer Situation auf uns zu, in der überkommene Lebensformen und Strukturen der Kirche der Kritik von verschiedenen Seiten ausgesetzt sind. Von einer ähnlichen Krise sind auch Strukturen und Lebensformen der Gesellschaft betroffen. Der rasche, oft auf revolutionäre Weise zustandegekommene Wechsel, besonders im staatlichen, wirtschafts- und bildungspolitischen Bereich, ist dafür ein Zeichen.

3. Die Aufgabe einer Besinnung auf das Amt wird dringlich gemacht und zugleich erschwert durch einen verwirrenden Sprachgebrauch. Das Wort „Amt“ hat einen spezifisch theologischen (Weiterführung des Auftrages Christi), einen institutionellen (Pfarramt) und einen mehr funktionalen (Beauftragter der Gemeinde) Bedeutungsgehalt. Im Folgenden wird unter „Amt“ der Dienst der öffentlichen Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung verstanden, der durch die Ordination übertragen wird.

4. Beauftragt von der Kirchenleitung der VELKD und dem DNK hat sich der Ökumenische Studienausschuß mit wichtigen Äußerungen ökumenischer Gremien zur Frage des Amtes befaßt. Dabei haben Aspekte der Amtsauffassung aus der römisch-katholischen, der anglikanischen und der orthodoxen Kirche besondere Berücksichtigung gefunden. Der Ökumenische Studienausschuß macht seinerseits hierzu Gesichtspunkte geltend, die nach seiner Überzeugung aufgrund der Heiligen Schrift und des Bekenntnisses der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche zentrale Bedeutung haben.

5. Der Ökumenische Studienausschuß versucht nicht, eine ausgeführte lutherische Amtslehre zu bieten¹. Vielmehr beschränkt er sich auf die Darlegung einiger Grundvoraussetzungen lutherischen Amtsverständnisses und weiß sich durch seine ökumenischen Gesprächspartner zu einer vertieften Neubesinnung aufgerufen.

6. Der Ökumenische Studienausschuß ist sich dessen bewußt, daß neue Entwicklungen und Arbeitsformen im kirchlichen Leben auch bei der Ausgestaltung der Lehre vom Amt und für die Amtsführung Berücksichtigung finden müssen. Er hat die Absicht, an diesen Fragen weiterzuarbeiten.

II. Voraussetzungen der ökumenischen Diskussion über das Amt

1. Grundlegend für unsere Orientierung ist die Heilige Schrift Alten und Neuen Testaments. Diese enthält zwar kein normatives Modell kirchlicher Ämter, sondern zeigt das Bild einer großen Vielfalt von Lebensformen, Funktionen und Strukturen kirchlichen Lebens. Es lassen sich jedoch in ihr eine Reihe von theologischen Grunddaten aufweisen, die dem ökumenischen Gespräch über das Amt die Richtung weisen können.

a) Die Schrift kennt besondere Dienste als Gaben Gottes durch den erhöhten Christus, mittels derer das Evangelium so zur Geltung gebracht wird, daß dadurch Menschen zum Glauben kommen, Gemeinden entstehen und die ganze Kirche als der Leib Christi aufgebaut wird.

b) Sie läßt eine theologisch begründete Entwicklung erkennen, die zur Herausbildung persongebundener Funktionen der Wortverkündigung und Gemeindeleitung führt, auch wenn eine eindeutige Gestalt dieser Dienste — etwa im Sinne des monarchischen Episkopats — im Neuen Testament noch nicht vorliegt. Dem entspricht es, daß die Ordination erst in den späten Schichten des Neuen Testaments genannt wird.

c) Das Neue Testament macht deutlich, daß diese besonderen Dienste, wie auch jeder andere Dienst der Christen, der Erfüllung der Sendung Jesu Christi dienen.

d) Es gibt innerhalb des so gesetzten Rahmens Freiheit zur konkreten Gestaltung dieser Dienste.

e) Darüber hinaus sollte in der gegenwärtigen ökumenischen Amtsdiskussion nicht nur das Neue Testament, sondern das gesamt-biblische Zeugnis vom Volk Gottes, seiner Sendung, seinem Dienst in der Welt berücksichtigt werden.

2. Die Ordnung des kirchlichen Amtes gehört zu den bleibenden Aufgaben der nachapostolischen Zeit. In der frühen Christenheit hat sich — unter Berufung auf Paulus — zusammen mit dem Kanon des Neuen Testaments die Überzeugung durchgesetzt, daß die Kirche in vom Geist erfüllten Ortsgemeinden lebt, die von einem Amtsträger, dem Bischof, geleitet werden. Diese Kirchenstruktur ist nicht kanonisch, aber eine ehrwürdige ökumenische Tradition. Die Wittenberger Reformation wollte sie nicht abtun, sondern gerade angesichts mittelalterlicher Entstellungen erneuern. Auch die lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften wollten mit ihren Aussagen über das Amt keine neuen Gegebenheiten setzen, sondern den vorausgesetzten Konsensus festhalten und ihn auf das zurückführen, was nach ihrer Überzeugung als seine legitime, schriftgemäße Basis gelten kann. Die Kontroverse um das kirchliche Amt, die zur Versagung der gegenseitigen Ämteranerkennung geführt hat, ist ein nachreformatorisches Problem; insbesondere

gilt das für die Frage nach dem Erfordernis episkopaler „apostolischer Sukzession“.

3. Die Wittenberger Reformation hat sich mit gutem Grund nicht auf ein bestimmtes Modell der Amtsstruktur und Kirchenverfassung festgelegt. Davon bleibt unberührt, daß sich aufgrund des Vorrangs des Wortes und der Lehre in den lutherischen Kirchen faktisch weithin eine Amtsauffassung durchsetzte, die primär an den Pastoralbriefen orientiert ist.

4. Schon die bisherigen ökumenischen Gespräche haben dazu beigetragen, daß Einseitigkeiten in der Amtslehre der verschiedenen Kirchen zum Teil überwunden wurden oder eine Konvergenz der Standpunkte erreicht wurde. Der Grad der Konvergenz zwischen den Positionen einzelner Kirchen ist jedoch unterschiedlich.

5. Die Erfahrungen zeigen, daß diese ökumenischen Gespräche gleichzeitig auf zwei Ebenen weitergeführt werden müssen: Auf der Ebene multilateraler Gespräche, wie sie vor allem durch den Accra-Bericht² repräsentiert wird, geht es primär darum, in gemeinsamer Orientierung an der Schrift und im gemeinsamen Bedenken der kirchlichen Traditionen und der gegenwärtigen Herausforderungen eine gemeinsame Basis zu finden, auf der alle am Gespräch beteiligten Kirchen einander näherkommen können.

Bei bilateralen Gesprächen, wie sie zum Malta-Bericht und zum Pullach-Bericht³ geführt haben, oder auch dem stärker aufgrund privater Initiative erarbeiteten Bericht der Gruppe von Dombes geht es darum, Kontroverspunkte, die jeweils zwischen bestimmten Traditionen bestehen, aufgrund heutiger theologischer Einsichten zu bewältigen und so kirchliche Entscheidungen auch über eine gegenseitige Anerkennung der Ämter vorzubereiten.

In den folgenden Teilen III und IV soll der Versuch einer kritischen Bestandsaufnahme auf beiden genannten Ebenen gemacht werden.

III. Konsensus und Differenz des multilateralen Dialogs

STELLUNGNAHME ZUM BERICHT „DAS AMT“ DER KOMMISSION FÜR GLAUBEN UND KIRCHENVERFASSUNG (ACCRA 1974)

1. Der Bericht von Accra (im folgenden AB) ist ein wichtiger Markstein in der Geschichte der multilateralen ökumenischen Gespräche über das Amt. Seine Bedeutung wird nicht dadurch gemindert, daß seine Verfasser bewußt auf die Formulierung eines übergreifenden Konsensus verzichtet haben. Im Gegenteil: Gerade diese Methode, gemeinsame Perspektiven, die zu einer Übereinstimmung führen können, aufzuzeigen, „die gegenwärtige ökumenische Debatte über das Amt zusammenzufassen“ und so gleichsam den Rahmen für den erstrebten Konsensus abzustecken, ist sachgemäß und hilfreich.

Indem er die Perspektiven zusammenfaßt, die sich auf den verschiedenen bilateralen und multilateralen Gesprächsebenen abzeichnen, liefert der Bericht den Nachweis einer beachtlichen Konvergenz theologischer und kirchlicher Positionen in der Ämterfrage.

2. Die folgende Stellungnahme beschränkt sich bewußt auf die wesentlichen Probleme, die in der Sicht lutherischer Theologie noch keine befriedigende Lösung gefunden haben. Sie versucht zugleich, die Richtung anzudeuten, in der eine solche gefunden werden könnte.

Christus — Amt — Gemeinschaft

3. Es ist grundsätzlich richtig, wenn AB das Amt in seiner doppelten Zuordnung zu Christus und zur christlichen Gemeinde in den Blick nimmt. Mit dem Hinweis darauf, daß Jesu dienendes Dasein für andere Grundlage und Ausgangspunkt aller Funktionen und Dienste in der Christenheit und damit auch des besonderen Amtes sei, ist ein fundamentaler Punkt angesprochen (AB 1).

4. Um theologische Unklarheiten zu vermeiden, ist es erforderlich, die Struktur dieser doppelten Zuordnung des Amtes sachgemäß zu beschreiben. Das besondere Amt hängt mit dem Dienen Jesu Christi so zusammen, daß es die von ihm ausgehende Bewegung aufnimmt, indem es konkret auf die Erbauung und Sammlung seiner Gemeinde zielt. Für das Amt gilt die durch Jesus Christus gesetzte allgemeine Norm des Dienens; sein *Proprium* ist die Verkündigung des Evangeliums, mit dem der erhöhte Christus seine Kirche erbaut.

5. Der Ansatz für das Verständnis des Amtes muß demnach bei Christus bzw. beim Evangelium, durch das er wirkt, gesehen werden, nicht jedoch bei der Gemeinde. Das Amt ist „Teil der Gemeinschaft“ (AB 2). Die Formulierung, daß „Wesen und Funktionen des ordinierten Amtes im Lichte dieser Gemeinschaft zu definieren“ (AB 2) sind, kann jedoch mißverstanden werden. Es muß deutlich bleiben, daß sowohl Amt als auch Gemeinschaft in ihrem Wesen und ihren Funktionen primär von Christus her zu bestimmen sind.

6. Nur wenn klargestellt ist, daß das Amt im Auftrag Christi gründet und nur in Beziehung zum Evangelium diesem Auftrag treu zu bleiben vermag, kann auch den jeweiligen konkreten gesellschaftlichen Gegebenheiten sachgemäß Rechnung getragen werden (AB 7—70) und ist ein zuverlässiges Kriterium für ihre Beurteilung gewonnen. Fehlt dieses Kriterium, so besteht Gefahr, daß ein rein soziologisches Kirchenverständnis die Gestaltung des Amtes normiert.

7. Genauerer Definition bedarf auch die Beziehung des Amtes zur Sendung Christi. Einige Formulierungen von AB (z.B. AB 5 und 25) machen die qualitative Differenz zwischen Christus und seinen Dienern vielleicht nicht genügend deutlich. Christus ist der Auftraggeber und die Quelle aller Dienste. Diese Dienste vollziehen also nicht sein Heilswerk, sondern sind nur Instrumente seines weitergehenden Heilswirkens.

Das „besondere Amt“ und die Vielfalt der Dienste⁴

8. Das besondere Amt hat seine Einheit in dem auf die Gründung und Erhaltung der Kirche zielenden Handeln Jesu Christi. Er selbst beauftragt Menschen, seine Heilsgaben Wort und Sakrament in solcher Weise öffentlich zur Geltung zu bringen, daß dadurch eine Gemeinschaft entsteht, in der das von Christus geschaffene Heil zur lebensbestimmenden Wirklichkeit wird.

9. Diese Einheit des besonderen Amtes bleibt auch da bestehen, wo es, den konkreten geschichtlichen Erfordernissen entsprechend, in äußerlich recht verschiedenartige Funktionen und Dienste aufgegliedert wird. Eine noch nicht gelöste Frage ist deshalb, wie die grundsätzliche Einheit des Amtes in Kirchen mit hierarchischen Strukturen, zu denen auch „das dreifache Amt von Bischof, Presbyter/Priester und Diakon“ (AB 25) gehört, zu verstehen ist.

10. Nicht hinlänglich geklärt erscheint ferner die Frage, welche Dienste und Funktionen als Ausprägungen des „besonderen Amtes“ gelten können und welche

nicht. Denn ohne Zweifel ist nicht unterschiedslos jeder in der Gemeinde geschehene Dienst Ausgliederung des „besonderen Amtes“, ebensowenig wie das traditionelle Gemeindepfarramt als die einzige legitime Gestalt dieses Amtes gelten kann. AB 26 nennt — wohl zu Recht — als unaufgebbare Strukturelemente des „besonderen Amtes“ die *episkope*, d.h. die Gemeindeleitung, und die presbyteriale Funktion, d.h. „die Verkündigung des Evangeliums und Verwaltung der Sakramente“. Aber müssen diese Strukturelemente bei jedem Träger eines „besonderen Amtes“, d.h. bei jedem Ordinierten, gegeben sein? Oder kann auch die Beauftragung mit einem Teilbereich — etwa mit besonderen Leitungsfunktionen oder mit speziellen Verkündigungsaufgaben — als Beauftragung mit dem „besonderen Amt“ gelten?

Amt und Priestertum

11. Die reformatorischen Kirchen haben mit der Überzeugung gebrochen, daß das besondere Amt eine Verlängerung des alttestamentlichen Priestertums sei. Sie wollten damit dem theologischen Sachverhalt gerecht werden, daß mit dem Kommen Jesu Christi, des wahren Hohenpriesters, das Heil ein für allemal gewirkt ist und es für die christliche Gemeinde keiner menschlichen Heilsmittlerschaft im Sinne des alttestamentlichen Priestertums mehr bedarf.

12. Diese Entscheidung ist durch den neutestamentlichen Sprachgebrauch gedeckt. Das Urchristentum hat weder den Begriff „Priester“ für gemeindliche Amtsträger verwendet noch deren Dienst als priesterlich im Sinne einer Heilsmittlerschaft durch kultisches Handeln bezeichnet.

Wenn das Neue Testament das Bild des Priesters bzw. des Opferkultes auf Christen überträgt, so handelt es sich dabei um eine spezifische Redeweise auf dem Hintergrund des Alten Testamentes, die ausdrückt, daß die Christen an der von Christus geschaffenen Versöhnungswirklichkeit Anteil haben. Das zeigt sich darin, daß sie sich selbst zu lebendigen Opfern geben, im Gebet freien Zugang zu Gott haben und die ihnen begegnende irdische Wirklichkeit der Herrschaft Gottes unterstellen und sie so heiligen (Röm 12,1 f.). In diesem Sinne sind alle Getauften ein „Volk von Priestern“ (1 Petr 2,9).

13. Es muß gefragt werden, ob es wirklich einen Beitrag zur „Versöhnung der Ämter“ darstellt, wenn in AB 20–22 versucht wird, von diesem Sprachgebrauch des Neuen Testamentes her eine Brücke zu den Kirchen zu schlagen, zu deren Tradition es gehört, das besondere Amt als priesterlichen Dienst zu verstehen. Zudem wird das „allgemeine Priestertum“ gegenüber den neutestamentlichen Aussagen auf die „Funktion des Opfers und der Fürbitte“ (AB 21) verkürzt. Das ist aber der Sache nach nur eine Wiederholung der Aussage von AB 1, in der von „unsere(r) Berufung in Christus zu einem opferbereiten, hingebenden und demütigen Engagement inmitten der Nöte und Bedürfnisse der Menschheit“ die Rede ist. Zu einer Lösung der Frage des priesterlichen Charakters des Amtes ist es erforderlich, daß man sich stärker über Einheit und Verschiedenheit von Altem und Neuem Testament verständigt und darüber, wie alles gottesdienstliche Handeln der Kirche auf das einmalige Kreuzesopfer Christi bezogen ist.

Damit ist die Frage noch nicht erledigt, ob und in welchem Sinne das besondere Amt priesterlich genannt werden kann, wie das auch die lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften tun (Apol. XIII, 9).

Apostolizität und apostolische Sukzession

14. Die Frage nach der Apostolizität ist in der nachneutestamentlichen Zeit der Prüfstein für die Legitimität kirchlicher Verkündigung. Das Wort „apostolisch“ taucht im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert im Zusammenhang mit bestimmten Theorien über die Anfangszeit der Kirche und die Begründung kirchlicher Autorität auf. Will man es theologisch sinnvoll gebrauchen, so muß man versuchen, ihm einen dem neutestamentlichen Sachverhalt angemessenen Inhalt zu geben. Im Sinne des Neuen Testaments bedeutet „apostolisch“ die Bindung an den von den Aposteln, d.h. den maßgeblichen Zeugen des Evangeliums in der ersten Generation, gelegten Grund. Die Apostolizität des Amtes besteht weder in der unmittelbaren Fortsetzung des Apostelamtes noch im Aufweis einer von den Aposteln ausgehenden Ämterabfolge. Apostolizität im Sinne des Neuen Testaments muß heißen: Die Träger besonderer Ämter folgen den Lehr- und Verhaltensnormen, die die apostolischen Zeugen der Anfangsgeneration vom Evangelium her gesetzt haben. Dadurch gibt es eine Kontinuität der Kirche in der Geschichte, die durch die apostolischen Zeugen sichtbar wird. Apostolisch ist das Amt, weil und insofern es den Auftrag hat, die Kirche auf dem von Aposteln und Propheten gelegten Grund zu erbauen (Eph 2,20).

15. Daß die „geordnete Weitergabe des Amtes“ ein „sichtbares Zeichen der Kontinuität der ganzen Kirche“ sein kann, ist mit AB 29 ausdrücklich anzuerkennen. Nur muß ebenso ausdrücklich zugestanden werden, daß dieses Zeichen nicht eindeutig ist. Die kirchengeschichtliche Erfahrung lehrt, daß in vielen Situationen der Vergangenheit das durch Sukzession äußerlich legitimierte Amt dem Evangelium untreu geworden ist und sich darum von seinem Auftrag her als „unapostolisch“ erwiesen hat. Das Vorhandensein einer „apostolischen Sukzession“ entbindet nicht von der kritischen Frage, ob das jeweilige Amt auf dem Boden des Evangeliums und damit des Auftrags Jesu Christi, Kirche zu bauen und zu leiten, steht. Aber das ist eine unter allen Kirchen der Christenheit gemeinsame Überzeugung.

Ordination und Sakramentalität

16. Die Ordination ist Auftrag und Gabe in einem: Sie ist Auftrag, insofern durch sie ein Mensch in Dienst genommen wird für die Aufgaben des besonderen Amtes, d.h. für die Sammlung und Bewahrung der Christenheit durch Wort und Sakrament, und damit der Norm des Evangeliums öffentlich unterstellt wird. Sie ist Gabe insofern, als der Ordinand die Gabe des Geistes erhält. Diese ist zu verstehen als die bindende Zusage Christi, daß er sich dieses Menschen und seiner natürlichen Fähigkeiten zur Erbauung der Gemeinde bedienen will. Diese Zusage verleiht Vollmacht. Sie als eine Ausrüstung mit übernatürlichen Fähigkeiten zu verstehen, ist jedoch problematisch. Sie muß vielmehr vom Ordinierten immer wieder in konkretem Dienst und Gehorsam realisiert werden.

17. Die Ordination erfolgt in einem öffentlichen Gottesdienst unter Handauflegung, Gebet und Anrufung des Heiligen Geistes. Durch diese Öffentlichkeit kommt ein wesentliches Merkmal des Amtes zum Ausdruck, nämlich daß der Amtsträger von der Gemeinde bei seinem Dienstauftrag behaftet und kritisch nach dessen sachgemäßer Durchführung gefragt werden kann. AB 47 scheint

demgegenüber zu einseitig die Verpflichtung der Gemeinde gegenüber dem Amtsträger herauszustellen.

18. Die beiden Aspekte des Auftrages und der Öffentlichkeit scheinen in AB 38—43 zu stark zurückzutreten zugunsten des Aspektes der Gabe. Weitere Probleme werden dadurch aufgeworfen, daß diese Gabe als „sakramental“ bezeichnet wird. Damit wird ein Terminus eingeführt, der in den verschiedenen Kirchen eine sehr unterschiedliche Geschichte hat und von daher nicht eindeutig ist. Mit einer Veränderung des Wortgebrauches ist wenig gewonnen. Auch die lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften können die Handauflegung der Ordination ein „Sakrament“ nennen (Apol. XIII, 13). Es muß geklärt werden, was mit dieser Bezeichnung jeweils gemeint ist.

IV. Konsens und Differenz in der bilateralen Beziehung

A) Zur römisch-katholischen Kirche

1. Die lutherische Kirche steht zur römisch-katholischen Kirche in einem besonderen Verhältnis. Die Last geschichtlicher Vorgänge und das Sichverpflichtet-fühlen gegenüber der jeweiligen Lehrtradition geben dem Gespräch seine spezifische Qualität. In diesem Gespräch zeigt sich, daß vordringlich zwei Punkte einer Klärung bedürfen: auf der einen Seite das Verständnis von Weihesakrament und Ordination, auf der anderen Seite das Verständnis des Petrusamtes bzw. der universalen Kirchenleitung.

2. Weihesakrament und Ordination

a) Wichtige Klärungen im Fundamentalen sind bereits erreicht, so etwa die Aussage, „daß das Amt sowohl *gegenüber* der Gemeinde wie *in* der Gemeinde steht“ (Malta 50). Diese Feststellung führt über die Behauptung hinaus, die christliche Gemeinde, etwa in Gestalt der gottesdienstlich versammelten Einzelgemeinde, könne exklusiv in das Amt delegieren, aber auch über die These von einer speziellen Vollmacht zur Ordination, die der Gesamtheit der Ordinierten oder einem besonderen Stande von weihfähigen Ordinierten allein zukomme.

b) Weiterhin erweist sich der protestantische Versuch als unzulänglich, Ordination und Weihesakrament mittels der Entgegensetzung von personaler Bindung und ontologisch-sakramentaler Qualifizierung zu unterscheiden. Entscheidend ist vielmehr die Frage, wie im Gehorsam des Glaubens beides sich verbinden läßt: Konkretheit und geschichtliche Kontinuität in der Vermittlung des Evangeliums durch beanspruchte und beauftragte Menschen einerseits und die im Evangelium begründete Freiheit des Glaubens, die durch keine zusätzlichen Forderungen und Bedingungen eingeengt werden darf, andererseits.

c) Das gegenseitige Verständnis der Ordination wird auch weiterhin zu fördern sein durch die historische und begriffliche Aufarbeitung der Frage, ob und in welchem Sinn die Ordination ein Sakrament sei.

Unabhängig vom Ergebnis dieser Klärung ist aber bereits jetzt eine konkrete Neuregelung hinsichtlich des Übertritts von ordinierten bzw. geweihten Pfarrern zur jeweils anderen Kirche möglich und wünschenswert. Seitens der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche sollte nicht bestritten werden, daß in der Priesterweihe der römisch-katholischen Kirche Bevollmächtigung und Sendung zum Amt geschieht,

das durch Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung die Gemeinde Christi sammelt. Die noch unaufgearbeiteten Elemente des Opferpriestertums und des Kanonisch-Jurisdiktionellen ändern daran nichts. Wenn also ein römisch-katholischer Priester in den Dienst einer evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche tritt, sollte auf eine Reordination verzichtet werden; es genügt, ihm die in seiner Priesterweihe schon vollzogene Berufung zu Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung innerhalb eines Gottesdienstes erinnernd vorzuhalten und ihn auf das evangelisch-lutherische Bekenntnis zu verpflichten.

3. Petrusamt und universale Kirchenleitung

a) Die Möglichkeit oder gar das Recht einer universalen Kirchenleitung ist für die lutherische Kirche historisch negativ besetzt durch die Absage des lutherischen Bekenntnisses an das römische Papsttum und dessen Anspruch, unter die Bedingungen des Heils zu gehören. Außerdem bestehen gerade an diesem Punkte bei fast allen Protestanten nicht zu unterschätzende emotionale Vorbehalte, die ein Gespräch erheblich belasten.

b) Neue kirchliche Gegebenheiten und neue theologische Einsichten nötigen jedoch zu einer Veränderung festgefahrener Urteile:

aa) Im Gefolge des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils ist eine Unterscheidung zwischen dem *Machtsanspruch* des römischen Bischofs, dem die Reformatoren entgegneten, und dem möglichen *Dienst* des römischen Bischofs am universalkirchlichen Petrusamt denkbar.

bb) Aufgrund neuerer exegetischer Einsichten legt sich ein differenzierteres Verständnis der Aussagen über das Petrusamt in Mt 16 nahe, das darauf hinausläuft, daß das Petrusamt nicht vergangen sein kann, sondern der Kirche bleibend eingestiftet ist.

c) Die Eindeutigkeit der Wahrheit, um die es im Bekenntnis des Petrus und bei seiner Beauftragung geht, läßt sich freilich nicht durch institutionelle Festschreibung sichern. Andererseits ist das Lehramt, das das Christusbekenntnis zur Sprache bringt, für die Kirche fundamental, und bei der Frage nach der Wahrnehmung des gesamtkirchlichen Lehrauftrags wird man am konkreten Lehramt des Bischofs von Rom nicht vorübergehen können.

d) Neben dem Thema eines gesamtkirchlichen Lehrauftrags stellt sich im Zeitalter der ökumenischen Bewegung auch die Frage, ob nicht zur Sammlung der Christenheit, zur Einheit der Kirche in Christus, ein universaler Dienst gehöre, der sich auch durch das Amt eines in der ganzen Christenheit respektierten Bischofs vollziehen kann.

e) Alle diese Erwägungen dürfen nicht mißverstanden werden als Vorschlag zu einer Rückkehr der Getrennten nach Rom. Die zentralen Anfragen der Reformatoren an das Papsttum sind im erforderlichen Dialog aufzunehmen und auf ihre Validität für heute zu überprüfen.

B) Zur anglikanischen Kirche

1. Zwischen den anglikanischen und lutherischen Kirchen bestehen weitreichende Gemeinsamkeiten aufgrund des Ursprungs im Neuen Testament, des Gewichts der frühchristlichen Geschichte und der Reformation des 16. Jahrhunderts,

die der Wiederentdeckung des echten Evangeliums diene. Trotzdem machen sich zwischen beiden Kirchenfamilien Unterschiede geltend, die eine volle sakramentale Gemeinschaft verhindern. Diese haben mindestens zum Teil ihre Wurzeln in der in beiden Kirchen verschiedenen Erfahrung und Bewertung der Reformation. Entsprechend werden auch lutherische Pfarrer (ohne apostolische Sukzession), die zu einer anglikanischen Kirche übertreten, reordiniert. Ziel des lutherisch-anglikanischen Dialogs ist es daher, die Unterschiede, die eine gegenseitige Anerkennung als Kirche Jesu Christi, einschließlich der Anerkennung der Ämter und Sakramente, verhindern, zu überwinden und den Weg zu voller sakramentaler Gemeinschaft zu öffnen. Dieser Dialog fand 1970–1972 auf der Weltebene (Pullach-Report 1972) und in den USA auf nationaler Ebene (2. Runde des Dialogs seit 1976) statt.

2. Der Pullach-Report und die Reaktionen auf diesen Bericht zeigen, daß die Amtsfrage der zentrale Kontroverspunkt ist. In den grundlegenden Funktionen des Amtes besteht Übereinstimmung. Im Anglikanismus besitzt darüber hinaus aber die bischöfliche Amtsstruktur und, damit verbunden, die apostolische Sukzession des Amtes eine wesentliche ekklesiologische Relevanz im Blick auf die Kontinuität und Einheit der Kirche. Diese bischöfliche Amtsstruktur ist darum auch zum tragenden Einheitsband der anglikanischen Gemeinschaft geworden.

3. Die Intention der bisherigen anglikanisch-lutherischen Gespräche war, den trennenden Charakter der Unterschiede in der Amtsfrage u. a. durch die Entfaltung eines gemeinsamen, umfassenderen Verständnisses der apostolischen Sukzession der ganzen Kirche sowie durch den Aufweis der in beiden Kirchenfamilien in unterschiedlichen Amtsstrukturen enthaltenen episkopalen Struktur (episkope) des Amtes zu überwinden. Eine gegenseitige Anerkennung des einen apostolischen Amtes in den jeweils verschiedenen Amtsformen der anderen Kirche wäre die Konsequenz. Die Ergebnisse der Gespräche geben Anlaß zur Hoffnung, daß eine solche Anerkennung in näherer Zukunft möglich ist.

4. Im Rahmen des anglikanisch-lutherischen Dialogs ist der anglikanische Partner zu fragen, ob nicht in vielen anglikanischen Kreisen in einer isolierten Weise eine bestimmte, historisch gewordene Amtsstruktur und ihre Ausgliederung in das dreifache Amt zum entscheidenden Kriterium für das Kirchesein einer Kirche gemacht wird. Kann einer historisch bedingten und geprägten Form ein solches Gewicht beigemessen werden? Andererseits deckt der anglikanisch-lutherische Dialog auf, daß im Luthertum Einheit und Kontinuität der Kirche zwar prinzipiell nachdrücklich betont werden, über deren strukturelle und zeichenhafte Ausdrucksformen dagegen nur wenig reflektiert wird. Auch bedürfte die faktisch vorhandene episkopale Struktur des Amtes im Luthertum (samt den episkopalen Leitungsämtern) einer sehr viel eingehenderen theologischen Reflexion als bisher.

5. Dabei wäre einmal der episkopale Charakter des in der Ordination übertragenen kirchlichen Amtes, wie es sich vor allem im parochialen Pfarramt zeigt, herauszuarbeiten (vgl. das Ordinations- und Einführungsformular Agende IV). Zum anderen wäre theologisch zu begründen, weshalb gerade lutherische Kirchen auch für die Strukturierung übergemeindlicher Kirchenordnung in der Regel „episkopale“ Modelle gewählt haben, ohne darin eine verpflichtende Norm zu sehen: Die Kirche wächst und lebt aus dem schaffenden Worte Gottes in Ver-

kündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung; deshalb ist kirchliche Autorität auf allen Ebenen der Leitung nicht vom Auftrag zur Verkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung zu trennen.

6. So sehr es das Ziel des lutherisch-anglikanischen Dialogs bleiben wird, die Differenzen zu überwinden, die einer vollen gegenseitigen Anerkennung als Kirche Jesu Christi noch im Wege stehen, so kann doch das Kriterium für die Anerkennung von in einer anderen Konfessionskirche erteilten Ordinationen nicht diplomatische Reziprozität sein. Deshalb wird eine lutherische Kirche, die einen anglikanischen Pfarrer in ihren Dienst übernimmt, zu berücksichtigen haben, daß er bereits ordiniert ist, unabhängig von der Entscheidung anglikanischer Gremien über die Gültigkeit der Ordination in der lutherischen Kirche.

C) *Zur orthodoxen Kirche*

1. Die christliche Theologie ist schon in der Spätzeit der Alten Kirche im Osten und im Abendland verschiedene Wege gegangen; die Wittenberger Reformation fand die Kirchen der Griechen und der Russen sowie die anderen orthodoxen und orientalischen Nationalkirchen bereits als eigene, vom lateinischen Westen getrennte Gemeinschaften vor. Ziel des ökumenischen Dialogs war es daher nicht, wechselseitige Verurteilungen zu überwinden, sondern zu erfahren, welches Maß an Gemeinsamkeit und wechselseitiger Anerkennung aufgrund der in Christus vorgegebenen Einheit sich erhalten hat und wieder belebt werden kann. Derartige Gespräche zwischen lutherischen und orthodoxen Kirchen haben bis jetzt ausschließlich auf regionaler Ebene stattgefunden; die Frage des kirchlichen Amtes war dabei wohl stets gegenwärtig, klang auch an⁵, rief auch literarische Stellungnahmen einzelner Theologen hervor, wird aber erst jetzt zum eigenen Thema erhoben (Konstantinopel V)⁶. Die geplanten Gespräche zwischen der panorthodoxen Konferenz und dem LWB werden diesen Problembereich nicht umgehen können.

Ohne diesem künftigen Dialog vorgreifen zu wollen, läßt sich heute schon sagen, daß sich das Gespräch mit der orthodoxen Amtslehre auf zwei Fragen konzentrieren wird: auf das Verhältnis von kirchlichem Amt und geistlichem Charisma und auf das Verhältnis des kirchlichen Amtes zum Kirchenganzen.

2. Amt und Charisma sind in der orthodoxen Tradition enger miteinander verbunden als im Abendland. Dies zeigt sich weniger bei der Sakramentsverwaltung im engeren Sinne, bei der in beiden Traditionen das Handeln des Liturgen vorwiegend funktional im folgenden Sinne verstanden wird: Der Priester leiht nur Christus als dem eigentlichen Liturgen Mund und Hände. In der Seelsorge hingegen wird vom orthodoxen Priester Handeln in charismatischer Vollmacht erwartet. Sowohl gegenüber manchen Riten der Liturgie (z.B. Proskomidie) als auch gegenüber manchen Formen charismatischer Seelsorge stellt sich für die lutherische Tradition die Frage, ob in ihnen nicht die dem Menschen gesetzten Grenzen überschritten werden. Andererseits stellt die Orthodoxie der Kirche der Wittenberger Reformation die Frage nach der charismatischen Füllung des Amtes.

3. In bezug auf Amt und Kirche war zwischen Lutheranern und Orthodoxen nie die Anerkennung von Ordination und Amt als ein besonderer dogmatischer oder kirchenrechtlicher Punkt als Kontroversfrage diskutiert worden, sondern immer die Frage nach der wechselseitigen Anerkennung der Kirchen als ganzer,

nämlich als Teil der einen universalen apostolischen Kirche, zu der auch das geistliche Amt gehört.

Gerade dieses ganzheitliche Denken steht lutherischer Tradition nahe, wenn auch bei den Orthodoxen die Einheit mehr im Wirken des Pneuma gesehen, bei uns Lutheranern aber als durch das verkündigte Wort Gottes gewirkt verstanden wird. Die orthodoxe Kirche widerstrebt einem Verfahren, zu dem der Westen leichter bereit ist, nämlich aus der Ganzheit des christlichen Glaubens und Lebens einzelne Teilbereiche, wie die Anerkennung des Weihesakraments, herauszunehmen, statt um einen Konsens in der Fülle des Glaubens zu ringen. Für orthodoxe Kirchen scheint es bis jetzt nicht vorstellbar, die Ordination und das Amt einer nicht in Kircheneinheit mit ihr stehenden christlichen Gemeinschaft als Ordination und Amt für die ganze Kirche Jesu Christi anzuerkennen.

4. Wenn deshalb auch eine wechselseitige Anerkennung der Ämter zwischen lutherischen und orthodoxen Kirchen kein isoliert anzustrebendes ökumenisches Ziel sein kann, so wird doch für den Fall, daß ein orthodoxer Priester in den Dienst einer lutherischen Kirche tritt, diese Kirche nicht davon absehen können, daß er bereits zum geistlichen Amt berufen und gesegnet worden ist. Sie wird dies bei der Einweisung in seinen neuen Dienst ebenso zu berücksichtigen haben wie bei der Übernahme eines römisch-katholischen Priesters.

V. Konsequenzen und Anfragen

1. Grund, Auftrag und Autorität des kirchlichen Amtes beruhen auf der Sendung und Bevollmächtigung der Jünger durch den auferstandenen Herrn. Insofern ist dieses Amt seine Stiftung. In seinem Auftrag dient es der Begründung und Bewahrung von Glauben zum Heil. Als Gabe des Heiligen Geistes erwächst solcher Glaube aus der Verkündigung in Predigt und Unterweisung, in Taufe und Abendmahl. Deshalb ist es sachgerechte kirchliche Ordnung, dem Amt die öffentliche Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung zuzuordnen, obwohl diese Verbindung erst geschichtlich geworden ist. Die Wittenberger Reformation hat diesen Zusammenhang erneut und mit eigener Begründung herausgestellt. Wir haben keinen Anlaß, von dieser Übung abzuweichen.

Ordination, Amt und Dienste

2. Dies kirchliche Amt ist nicht identisch mit einer Gestalt der in der Geschichte gewachsenen Ämter, auch nicht mit dem frühchristlichen Bischofsamt oder unserem parochialen Pfarramt. Aber diese Ämter, auch unser Pfarramt, leben in ihren verschiedenen Erscheinungsformen von der Stiftung Christi. Deshalb ist die bei uns bestehende Ordnung, Ordination und Installation zu unterscheiden, sinnvoll, wenn auch nicht unabdingbar. Sendung, Segnung und Bevollmächtigung in der Ordination sind Einsetzung in das kirchliche Amt; die Installation ist die Einweisung in einen konkreten Dienstbereich dieses Amtes.

3. Das kirchliche Amt ist auch nicht auf Ortsgemeinden beschränkt. Sein episkopaler Aspekt tritt besonders deutlich in den regionalen Leitungsämtern heraus. Um ihrer übergemeindlichen Verantwortung willen ist es angemessen, den Inhabern solcher Ämter die Vollmacht zu Ordinationen und Amtseinsetzungen in ihrem Sprengel zu übertragen. Damit soll nicht verdeckt werden, daß der Auf-

trag, Menschen in das kirchliche Amt durch Zurüstung, Wahl, Ordination und Installation einzuweisen, in nachapostolischer Zeit grundsätzlich der Kirche als ganzer zukommt.

4. Dem sollte auch die Ordinationspraxis unserer Kirchen entsprechen. Die liturgischen Ordnungen haben zum Ausdruck zu bringen, daß und wie die ganze Gemeinde am gottesdienstlichen Vollzug der Ordination beteiligt ist, neben dem Ordinator und den assistierenden Pfarrern also auch die nichtordinierten Gemeindeglieder. Es bestehen keine Bedenken, auch eine Beteiligung Nicht-Ordinierter an der Handauflegung zu ermöglichen.

5. In Abwendung vom bisherigen Brauch ist für den Fall des Übertritts eines römisch-katholischen, anglikanischen oder orthodoxen Priesters zur evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche und seiner Aufnahme in das ministerium ecclesiasticum unserer Kirche klarzustellen, daß er nicht neu ordiniert wird.

Bei der ersten Installation oder in einem eigenen Gottesdienst ist auf seine Priesterweihe als Ordination zu verweisen und seine Zusage entgegenzunehmen, daß er das Wort Gottes nach dem Zeugnis des evangelisch-lutherischen Bekenntnisses als verbindlich für seinen Dienst anerkennt.

Dazu bedarf es einer theologischen und liturgischen Präzisierung, in welcher Weise das Weiheformular, das bei der Priesterweihe benützt wurde — oder welche Teile daraus —, in dem erinnernden Vorhalt aufgenommen werden, und wie das neue Gelöbnis auf diese geschehene Sendung und Segnung bezogen ist.

6. Das Problem der Frauenordination, das in den vorausgegangenen Ausführungen unberücksichtigt blieb, scheint das Verhältnis der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirchen, die Frauen ordinieren, zu solchen Kirchen, die dies nicht tun, gerade auch in der Amtsfrage erneut zu belasten. Dazu ist zu sagen:

a) Die Frage nach Recht oder Unrecht der Frauenordination ist auch ein Problem im Verhältnis zwischen lutherischen Kirchen.

b) Nach den Ausführungen einiger römisch-katholischer Theologen ist zwar die Praxis, aber keineswegs die dogmatische Lehre oder gar die definitive lehramtliche Äußerung der römisch-katholischen Kirche eindeutig verneinend. Dann wäre auch bei Fortschreibung bzw. Änderung der Praxis der dogmatische Dialog nicht abgebrochen. Aus dem Bereich der orthodoxen Kirchen gibt es nur wenige vergleichbare Aussagen. Kirchenrechtlich gilt aber in jedem Fall, daß diese Kirchen keinen Frauen die Priesterweihe erteilen.

c) Der Komplex „Frauenordination“ gehört nach unserem Verständnis in den größeren Zusammenhang der Frage nach dem angemessenen Umgang der Christenheit mit den Veränderungen der Gesellschaft in der Neuzeit; in dem hier aufgebrochenen Streit geht es gerade um die Frage nach der rechten Weise, in diesen Veränderungen auf die für die Kirche bleibend maßgebenden Aussagen des Neuen Testamentes zu hören.

d) Kirchen, die keine Frauen ordinieren, werden zu prüfen haben, wie sie Frauen in den kirchlichen Dienst aufnehmen, die in einer anderen Kirche die Ordination empfangen haben. Unsere evangelisch-lutherischen Kirchen, die Frauen ordinieren, werden den biblischen Grund dieser ihrer Praxis den anderen Kirchen immer neu zu verdeutlichen haben, auch um der Einheit des geistlichen Amtes in der Kirche und um ihres Auftrages willen.

7. Zusammen mit dem Pfarramt partizipieren auch andere Ämter und Dienste in Gemeinden oder übergemeindlicher Art an diesem besonderen kirchlichen Amt. Die Form der Sendung, Segnung und Bevollmächtigung zu solchen Ämtern und Diensten wird davon abhängen, wieweit sie öffentliche Verkündigung samt Sakramentsverwaltung einschließen oder ihr zugeordnet sind. Es gibt praktische Gründe, die zu einer Differenzierung von Aufgaben und Beauftragungen Anlaß geben können; aber es ist gute reformatorische Tradition, den Auftrag zur eigenverantwortlichen öffentlichen Wortverkündigung und zur Sakramentsverwaltung nicht auseinanderzureißen. Dieser Auftrag wird in der Ordination erteilt.

8. Sendungen und Beauftragungen, die nicht den vollen Dienstauftrag zu Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung einschließen, sind nach der Tradition unserer Kirche keine Ordination. Aber auch dort, wo in besonderen Fällen zeitlich und örtlich begrenzte Beauftragungen erfolgen (z.B. Predigtdienst, Seelsorge und Taufe im Krankenhaus), sollte dazu in einem öffentlichen Gottesdienst unter Verpflichtung auf die apostolische Lehre, wie sie im Bekenntnis der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche bewahrt ist, eingesegnet werden.

Außerdem gibt es in der Christenheit lebenslange Berufungen und zeitlich befristete Aufgaben, denen Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung nicht primär aufgetragen sind. Die Sendung zu solchen Diensten geschieht in einer Einsegnung.

Eine scharfe Abgrenzung solcher Beauftragungen und Dienste voneinander ist praktisch oft kaum möglich und theologisch wenig sinnvoll. Auch diese Dienste, in die nicht durch Ordination eingewiesen wird, stehen unter der Verheißung Christi und haben teil an der Sendung für die Welt.

Es ist zu prüfen, wieweit sie auch, zusammen mit Pfarramt und Kirchenvorstand, an der Gemeindeleitung beteiligt werden sollen.

Gemeindeleitung (episkope)

9. Mit dem Amt der Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung ist von den neutestamentlichen Ansätzen her bereits die spezifische Verantwortung der Gemeindeleitung (episkope) verbunden worden. Diese „episkope“ ist nicht primär im Sinne einer administrativen oder repräsentativen Leitung einer Gemeinde oder Kirche zu verstehen, die auch von anderen Gliedern und Organen der Kirche wahrgenommen werden kann und soll. Unter „episkope“ ist vor allem die „geistliche“ Leitung von Gemeinde und Kirche zu verstehen, die durch Verkündigung, Verwaltung der Sakramente, Seelsorge, Beratung und Unterweisung geschieht.

10. Die in diesen Formen ausgeübte „episkope“ zielt darauf,

a) die in Gemeinde und Kirche vorhandenen Gaben und Dienste zu wecken und zu fördern, damit die ganze Kirche befähigt wird, das Evangelium durch Wort und Tat in der Welt zu bezeugen;

b) dafür Sorge zu tragen, daß in den verschiedenen Aktivitäten und Lebensäußerungen der Kirche der Auftrag und die Sendung der Kirche Jesu Christi deutlich bleiben und

c) dabei im Auge zu behalten, daß im Hören auf die Stimme der Väter und im Gespräch mit den Brüdern und Schwestern in der eigenen wie in anderen Kirchen Kontinuität und Einheit der Kirchen gewahrt bleiben.

11. Dieser Dienst der „episkope“ wird in der Kirche auf verschiedenen Ebenen ausgeübt:

a) Die „episkopale“ Leitungsfunktion trägt im Rahmen der lokalen Verkörperung der Kirche Jesu Christi der ordinierte Pastor.

b) Auf der regionalen Ebene wird dieses Amt in Wahrnehmung einer gesamt-kirchlichen episkopalen Verantwortung ausgeübt. Darum ist es angemessen, dem Träger dieses Amtes den Auftrag zur Ordination, Visitation und Seelsorge an den Pastoren zu übertragen. Aufgrund seiner gesamt-kirchlichen Stellung kommt ihm eine besondere ökumenische Verantwortung zu. Die Inhaber eines solchen episkopalen Amtes (z.B. auch Landessuperintendenten, Kreisdekane, Prälaten, Visitatoren etc.) sollten in der Regel auch den Titel Bischof führen.

c) Im ökumenischen Gespräch mit der römisch-katholischen Kirche wird in letzter Zeit zunehmend die Frage gestellt, ob nicht die Gemeinschaft und Einheit der Kirche auch auf universaler Ebene durch ein episkopales Amt zeichenhaft verkörpert werden sollte. Diese Frage bedarf vor kirchlichen Festlegungen noch einer eingehenden theologischen Erörterung.

ANMERKUNGEN

¹ Vgl. die Stellungnahmen des Theologischen Ausschusses der VELKD/DNK zu Amt und Ordination von 1970 und 1976 sowie das Votum der Bischofskonferenz der VELKD von 1976, zu beziehen durch das Lutherische Kirchenamt, Hannover.

² „Eine Taufe – Eine Eucharistie – Ein Amt“, hrsg. v. G. Müller-Fahrenholz, Sonderdruck aus Beiheft zur Ökumenischen Rundschau 27, Frankfurt ² 1976.

³ Pullach-Bericht über das anglikanisch-lutherische Gespräch 1970–72 s. Luth. Rundschau 1972/4 S. 505 ff.; s. auch „Vom Dialog zur Gemeinschaft“, Ökumenische Dokumentation Bd. 2, hrsg. v. G. Gaßmann, Frankfurt 1975; Bericht der Gruppe von Dombes (40 französisch-sprachiger kath., ref. u. luth. Theologen) s. Herder-Korrespondenz, 1973/1 S. 33 ff.; Malta-Bericht = Bericht d. ev.-luth./röm.-kath. Studienkommission „Das Evangelium und die Kirche“ in: „Luthertum und Katholizismus im Gespräch“, Ök. Perspektiven Bd. 3, hrsg. v. H. Meyer, Frankfurt 1973.

⁴ „Besonderes Amt“ entspricht in dieser Stellungnahme zum Accra-Dokument (also III) dem, was in I 3 „Amt“ genannt wird.

⁵ Vgl. Arnoldshain VII, Juni 1976, Thesenreihe Borovoj/Stuhlmacher, Thesen 8 und 9. Demnächst als Beiheft zur Ökumenischen Rundschau 32.

⁶ „Eucharistie und Priesteramt“, 5. theologisches Gespräch zwischen Vertretern der EKD und dem Ökumenischen Patriarchat vom 20. bis 25. Februar 1978 in Bonn.

FROM:

Statement on Ministry of the
Lutheran Church in America
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"A Study of Ministry, 1980"

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A STUDY OF MINISTRY, 1980

Understanding Ministry

The study of ministry is an ongoing process for the Lutheran Church in America.¹ This constant study is necessary since neither the New Testament nor the Lutheran Confessions contains a definitive doctrine of ministry. The forms of ministry must be worked out by each generation of the Church² in its historical setting.

As the LCA engages in this study process, it considers the forms in the light of Scripture, the Confessions and the experience of the Church. Yet it meets needs contextually because it works in evangelical freedom. It has the gospel of salvation by grace through faith. This freedom means that ambiguity, diversity and debate are to be expected, but they can be met with study, deliberation and decisive actions.

The LCA Bylaws make the Division for Professional Leadership responsible for conducting the ongoing study of ministry and reporting regularly to the church. "Regularly" need not mean routine. The occasion of a report on ministry can be a special opportunity for the church to reflect on the mission of reconciliation that God has given it, and to appraise its stewardship of that ministry. The church can also use the occasion to raise questions, foresee developments and make responses. A study may even dare to review the foundations of ministry. These undertakings may be formidable, but changing times make them necessary.

This study has the advantage of building upon a report made in 1970. That report was the result of three biennia of work by commissions on "The Comprehensive Study of the Doctrine of the Ministry." It identified for the LCA a pair of points which have proven significant, namely, that *the ministry is the task of the whole people of God*, and that *all Christians are ministers*. It also gave the LCA the words *representative* and *official*, terms which have become

useful in describing the ministry of ordained persons. As this 1980 report views ministry from the perspective of the ten years of subsequent developments, it begins with the church's growing awareness of the ministry of the whole people of God, and continues from there to examine the roles of ordained ministers.

The study seeks to be faithful to the biblical witness and to the historical development of ministry. From apostolic times to the present persons have labored for the Lord in their stations in the world and in the offices of the Church. This fidelity and endurance can give the church balance against passing fads and competing claims while relating the church to God's changing world.

Among the changes, certain concerns stand out. One is for racial and ethnic inclusiveness. The LCA has stated its commitment to become an inclusive member of the Body of Christ. That means more than adding people of colors and cultures different from this church's European forebears. It entails a deepening of the Lutheran perspective on the gospel.

A second concern is the awareness of the changing roles of women and men. The impact goes beyond the ordination of women and a sensitivity to language. The church is becoming increasingly conscious of both feminine and masculine dimensions of ministry and theology.

A third set of concerns encompasses energy shortages, economic dislocations, and shifting population patterns, together with persistent alienation of persons from institutions. How can the church fulfill its mission in that complex? Questions are raised about the need for all congregations to be served by pastors on a full-time basis. Might other forms of ministry be called for? This report suggests some directions which the church could take.

Ecumenical issues, too, are being raised as Christians seek to understand their unity in Christ. The 1980 LCA convention will be asked whether to continue the policy of requiring ordination by this church of persons entering the Office of the Ministry of Word and Sacraments in this church when they are coming from another Christian church in which they had been previously ordained.

1. LCA Bylaws, Sec. X, C, 2: "The division shall conduct an ongoing study of ministry and report regularly to this church on the ministry of the laity in the world and in the church, and on the role of ordained ministry . . ."

2. The terms *whole people of God* and *the Church* are the equivalent of the *one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church*. The word *church* without the capital letter refers to the Lutheran Church in America and institutional expressions of the Church.

These are only a few of the issues which press upon the Church as the LCA tries to understand ministry. Even these questions are too many for consideration in a single study presented to one convention. Consequently, the division focuses the 1980 study on the fundamentals of the ministry of the whole people of God and then particularly on the Office of Word and Sacraments within that whole ministry. The division is committed to undertaking a study specifically of the ministry of the laity in the world and in the church. The expectation is that that report will be presented not later than 1984.

Understanding the Ministry of the Whole People of God

Ministry is God's Word in action through the whole people of God. From start to finish the Word speaks and does God's will in all its hiddenness and openness. Ever bringing forth light from darkness, and the Word transforms brokenness into wholeness, hostility into reconciliation, despair into joy, death into life. In the Word made flesh, the people of God are given the vision of that age in which they will have eternal peace with God and one another. The liberating message of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit assure each person that life in the new creation is begun now. In short, the Word makes known the good news that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." This gospel is the treasure which God gives to the Church. All believers are made stewards of that treasure. They are the community of ministers who are the priesthood of believers.

Ministry includes the Word working through the whole people of God to create a just community in the world. In their relationships and occupations, Christians can know they are partners with the Creator. God's faithfulness sustains them in their service.

The past decade has heightened the understanding that all Christians are ministers, and ministry is the task of the whole people of God. Every Christian is called to minister to his or her neighbor in the world. Thus, the word *ministry* is not reserved for the work of ordained ministers. It is fundamental to the vocation of all lay persons as well as to the special responsibilities of those engaged in the Office of the Ministry of Word and Sacraments.

Ministry is the task of the whole people, yet what is this task? What is the ministry which the Church is called to fulfill? How can its actions be described, its functions distinguished, its tasks ventured? Frankly, ministry transcends human definition. It comes from God and ultimately leads back to God. It bears a holy strangeness, and possesses an authority which is beyond our comprehension and control. At the same time, ministry is intensely human. God entrusts it to men and women, and expresses it through their personalities. Ministry, then, has both divine and human dimensions, and opens our very beings to God's judgment and love. While we may attempt to describe this ministry, we will neither plumb its depth nor measure its breadth.

DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS OF MINISTRY

One way to understand ministry is to ask what distinguishes it from any other human task. What are the elements of ministry in the work of a chemistry teacher, a homemaker, and an ordained person for example?

The distinctive elements of ministry include reconciliation, priesthood, proclamation and teaching, witness, service, daily work, justice, and oversight. The Word is manifest through each of these elements.

1. Reconciling

A reconciliation is more than an armistice. A reconciliation is a changed relationship whereby enemies are transformed into friends. Those who make themselves enemies of God, as everyone does, are reconciled in Christ. They are forgiven and declared to be the friends for whom Jesus laid down his life. On the basis of that forgiveness and reconciliation, believers are called to forgive as they have been forgiven. They are enabled to live as reconciled friends with all persons because the peace created by God in Jesus overcomes hostility. Barriers raised by racial and sexual prejudices are overcome by the unifying peace in Christ. Living and extending that peace in any situation is a ministry.

2. Interceding

A priest is given the power to intercede for other persons before God. God has given all believers the power to be priests. This universal priesthood gathers the hurts and hopes of the whole human family to present them before the Lord of life.

These priests who come into the presence of the holy and almighty King are deeply aware that in themselves they are unworthy of the task. Nevertheless, because they trust in Jesus, their great High Priest, they may be confident that the Father will hear and answer them. In Luther's words, they are little Christs to their neighbors. That priestly ministry is performed for example by a lay person or pastor when responding with forgiveness to a person in confession, or when praying for a neighbor who seeks relief from anguish.

3. *Proclaiming and Teaching*

The Word reaches outward to all nations. It reaches inward among the people as they listen and learn. Proclaiming and teaching are the actions by which it does this. The church may provide various settings for forms of ministry, ranging from the congregation's worship and educational program to the undertakings of colleges and seminaries to the work of mission around the world.

4. *Witnessing*

The Church is not expected to persuade by eloquent speech or brilliant logic. It is simply called to tell to all people what it has witnessed. "We beheld his glory, full of grace and truth." The Lord who came to bear witness to the One who sent him, sends his disciples to proclaim the coming Kingdom, promising to be with them always. The messengers may be heard gladly and thankfully, or resisted and ignored, but each is given the words of witness, faltering, yet fitting to his or her place in the world.

5. *Serving*

The Kingdom of God is not idle talk or meaningless gestures. It is power. That power is in the hands of the Body of Christ as it reaches out to comfort and shape from earthly clay new men and women in God's diverse world. The people of God, laity and clergy, can act with more than humanitarian dedication, for they have the Word by which the believing community feeds, heals, clothes and stands with the distressed, oppressed and alienated.

6. *Working in the Creation*

The church also has the Word by which the believing community knows God as

Creator. Christians minister as the Word inspires them in their everyday occupations, relationships, and responsibilities.³ As parents, children, neighbors, citizens, and workers, they live to bring forth the Creator's will for the world. While the Word keeps them realistically aware of the fallenness of the world, it also keeps them confident that God has overcome evil for the new creation. This faith sustains them when weary and renews them to see God's goodness in the world. They are empowered to perceive and persist through a new perspective.

7. *Doing Justice*

Ministry includes a demand for justice and mercy in human relationships and institutions. In the judgment and on the cross, the Word drew all to himself, summoning them to crucial decisions about light and darkness, life and death. While Christians pray for the advent of God's Kingdom, they are to work conscientiously and responsibly for justice in society. The Church is not exempt from this message. Christ spoke for correction in local worship centers, cleansed the Temple, and shocked religious leaders with forthright criticism. The same admonishing, startling, judgmental Word is spoken today. When the community of believers shrinks from being the new humanity of the coming Kingdom, God raises up voices to call it again to that fullness. When the world is rife with oppression and callousness, neither does God abandon it, but sends forth servants to act for justice. The God who knows our hearts and our works summons us to be hearers and doers of the Creator's will.

8. *Overseeing the Church*

The surprising action of God in Christ gives ministry both freedom and order. It breaks through unresponsive human structures. Each Christian serves Christ as the Spirit gives opportunity. But ministry's freedom is not chaotic or irresponsible. We are about the Word's work and we are under God's rule. Yet, the people of God have the authority to shape and direct the forms of ministry so that they will be effective and relevant.

Both lay people and those in the Office of

3. The LCA Manifesto, 1966 LCA Minutes, pp. 563f.

Word and Sacraments have responsibilities for overseeing the life and work of the church. Examples of lay supervision are participation in church council, congregational meetings and conventions. Examples of supervision by ordained ministers are pastoral leadership of a congregation, synodical care of parishes, and churchwide development of mission.

The Wittenberg reformers recognized the need for maintaining continuity and order among congregations and the institutions of the church. They therefore retained the functions and title of bishops. At the same time, they held that the universal priesthood possessed authority to choose and approve persons publicly to teach, preach and proclaim the Word; baptize; administer the eucharist; proclaim forgiveness and discipline members; pray for others; be examples of Christ-like love; and judge doctrines and spiritual forces. Thus, as with the other elements of ministry, the supervision of the church involves both lay and ordained persons.

THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH

Another way of understanding ministry is to relate it to the Marks of the Church.⁴ Luther described the Church by saying it possesses certain marks which identify it as God's holy people and through which the Spirit effects daily sanctification and life in Christ.⁵ These marks or signs are

1. The Word of God. The Word is to be proclaimed, sincerely believed, and openly confessed. The Word is the absolutely essential mark and is the basis for all the others.
2. The Sacrament of Baptism. Baptism is to be taught, believed and administered according to Christ's command.
3. The Sacrament of the Altar. The Sacrament of the Altar also is to be taught, believed and rightly administered. It is received by God's people so that they might act in faith and openly confess that they are Christians.

4. For example Augsburg Confession VII, and Apology of the Augsburg Confession VIII, 5, 20 cite the preaching of the Gospel in its purity and the administration of the sacraments according to the Gospel. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession VII, 3 expresses the marks as "Word, confession, and sacraments."

5. Luther, *On the Councils and the Church*, Luther's Works, AE, Volume 41.

4. The Public Exercise of the Office of the Keys (Matthew 18:15-20). In accord with the Word as law and gospel, the Church is to discipline the erring and offer God's forgiveness to the repentant both in public and private.
5. The Consecration or Call of Members to be Bishops, Pastors or Preachers. For the good order of the Church, it is necessary for there to be bishops, pastors and preachers. They "publicly and privately give, administer and use the aforementioned (marks) . . . in behalf of and in the name of the Church, or rather by their institution by Christ."
6. Prayer, Public Praise, and Thanksgiving to God in Accord with the Word and True Faith. Worship is to be orderly and intelligible so that Christians will also learn and mend their ways.
7. Possession of the Cross. Bearing the cross is a means by which believers become more Christ-like, prepare to serve God and others with their lives and possessions, and are enabled to endure misfortune, persecution, trial and evil.

The distinctive elements of ministry and the marks of the Church indicate that all Christians share in the wholeness of ministry. Within that totality there are different roles, functions and responsibilities. The most readily recognized diversity is in the ministries of lay and ordained persons.

Understanding the Ministry of the Laity

While an intensive study of the ministry of lay persons in the world and in the church is anticipated in the coming biennia, some basic understandings may be ventured here. God's ministering action reaches out in manifold ways in all times and places so that people everywhere can hear the Word and live in its creative power. God calls lay persons to carry out this ministry in all areas of their lives. Redeemed by Christ, baptized into his death and resurrection, declared heirs of the promise of eternal life, and made members of the universal priesthood, they experience God's grace and are empowered to be the Lord's disciples. The gospel frees them to manifest the good news of salvation and do the Creator's will for justice.

God gives lay persons awesome opportunities and challenges in the world as well as in the Church. Assured by the presence and help of the Spirit, laity prepare for their ministries through diligent and regular participation in worship, communion, prayer and study. Wherever they reside, work, learn and play, there are places for their ministry. Whatever associations, organizations and institutions they join, there is an entry for their ministry. Whoever they are among any ethnic and racial groups, within the many human cultures, and with both sexes, they have natural spheres for their ministry.

In all these arenas lay Christians minister explicitly and implicitly as they are moved by the Spirit. They disclose the wonders of God's grace, the reconciliation assured in Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the relationships of family, neighborhood and school, and in opportunities at places of employment, recreation and commerce. Sharing the responsibilities and cares, the hopes and fears of other men and women, these ambassadors for Christ carry forward the proclamation of the gospel each day. At the same time, lay persons stand for the fulfillment of God's justice in the world. Exercising the duties and rights of citizenship, they bring to bear on political and societal issues the will of the Creator for human dignity and development. As parents and children, employers and employees, leaders and participants in the social order, they are called to be heralds of God's rule.

These ministries that lay persons have in the world are rooted in the ministry they also have in the Church. Their presence and devotion at worship, their dedication and patience in planning, their skills and resources in programming are needed means through which the Christian community is enabled to reach out to the world and to other believers. Lay women and men rightly stand at the altar, lead classes, and guide the work of the Church.

Thus the ministry of the laity expresses the breadth and diversity of the action of the Word through the whole people of God.

Understanding the Office of Word and Sacraments

To this point this study has considered the distinctive elements of ministry, the marks of the church and introductory de-

scriptions of the ministry of the laity. It moves now to focus on the Office of Ministry of Word and Sacraments. Why should there be an office, that is, a definite sphere of responsibilities, for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments?⁶ The historic Lutheran answer is that the office exists so that faith in Jesus Christ will be established. God creates a constant and public office to which people can always go to hear the Word and from which the Word will always be spoken.

The Augsburg Confession says unabashedly that the office is needed to establish faith in Jesus Christ because we are sinners. It begins by saying that "... we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sins and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us."⁷ The answer concludes that in order for women and men "to obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the gospel and the sacraments."⁸

Put into contemporary terms, human beings, living in the rubble of broken relationships and hungering for wholeness, desperately need assurance, and they need it on all levels of existence. The God who knows our inmost fears and longings, who judges us for our unbelief and injustice, is also the merciful God who gave the beloved Son so that we might live in him now and forever. To be sure, this is the same message of the gospel that is spoken and enacted by the universal priesthood, by the ministry of the laity as well as by the Office of the Word and Sacraments. Yet people still require a place

6. Traditionally Lutherans have spoken of the Ministry of Word and Sacraments as an "office." The Reformers used the German *Amt* (office), distinguishing it from *Stand* (status or rank). All Christians have the same status (*Stand*) because they are all members of the universal priesthood. They are simply called to fill differing offices.

7. *Augsburg Confession*, Article IV. The order of the related articles in the Confession is noteworthy. Article II on Original Sin describes the human condition, Article III states the Christian teaching on Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour of humanity, and Article IV presents the doctrine of justification. Article V, on the office of the ministry, is linked directly to the preceding positions. It is followed by the affirmation of good works as the result of justification (Article VI). Only then does the Confession consider the Church (Articles VII, VIII, *et al.*)

8. *Augsburg Confession*, Article V.

where the Word of life may always be heard and grasped with clarity. The Office of the Ministry of Word and Sacraments is God's enduring witness. Although a minister in this office will range from being faithful and competent to being careless and fallible, the purpose and authority of the office still stands as God intended it: to establish, sustain and extend saving faith in Jesus Christ.

By emphasizing that the office is instituted by God, a point not made about any other ministering function, the Lutheran reformers provided important understandings for their time and for ours.

First, this office is the one indispensable form of ministry among Christians. The Church did not establish the office; God did. The gospel and the sacraments are used by the Spirit to work or produce faith in God's grace in Christ. In obedience to its Lord, the Church can neither disestablish nor divest that office of its responsibility to proclaim, teach and make visible God's saving will through Word and sacraments. The functions lodged in this office, moreover, take precedence over all ecclesiastical structures, titles, rites, and liturgies. For example, the rite of ordination does not establish the office, the office gives cause for the rite. Certainly, that ceremony is significant. It is the traditional form by which the Church recognizes publicly that individuals have been called by the Spirit and authorized by the Church to serve in that office. Through the rite, persons entering the office also publicly attest to their commitment to serve faithfully in it.⁹ The rite is important because the office is important.

Second, this ministry of the Word stands over churches and, when necessary, even against churches and the world. Included in its purposes is the responsibility to summon persons to repentance, and that involves critical appraisals and forthright proclamations about conditions in the Church and society. Yet the ultimate summons to repentance is not condemnation but life through reconciliation. The office then becomes a locus for healing and hope. In

addition, through it persons who are isolated, feared, despised, rejected and subjected are alike invited to full partnership in the Body of Christ.

Third, the God who instituted the Office of Word and Sacraments entrusts that ministry to the universal priesthood, the Church. Describing that community as "... the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments administered according to the gospel,"¹⁰ Lutherans hold that "nobody should publicly teach, preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call."¹¹ This assures that the purposes for which this ministry was instituted will be ventured by God's people in reverence, with care, and by an orderly means. Indeed, for the Church to be the assembly of believers, it must have a grasp of what the gospel is and what the sacraments are. Relying upon the Spirit, it is able to distinguish the Word from opinion. The office is prior to the forms of the Church and even stands over the Church, but all the while is filled only by persons called by the whole people of God. The Church then has the authority and responsibility to call persons to the office.

EXPECTATIONS OF ORDAINED MINISTERS

The Ministry of Word and Sacraments is a holy office within the holy ministry God gives to the Church. The "otherness" of the office is a cause for wonder and humility. Those who dare to serve in it must be open to the surprising action of God. They neither become other than human, nor are they granted immunity from sin, failure, and problems. God's action leads them to self-scrutiny and venturesome faith. They are not given the office by God or the Church, but they are called to fill it.

Entry upon this ministry entails certain expectations, and continuance in it involves meeting the church's expectations. What does the Lutheran Church in America expect its ordained ministers to be, to have and to do?¹²

9. In the *Order for Ordination*, the persons being ordained promise to preach and teach the Word of God in accordance with the Confessions of the Church; to administer the Holy Sacraments after the ordinance of Christ; to be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture, instant in prayer, and faithful in the use of the Means of Grace; and to adorn the doctrine of God by a holy life and conversation.

10. *Augsburg Confession*, Article VII.

11. *Augsburg Confession*, Article XIV.

12. The expectations which follow are gleaned from LCA Constitution, Bylaws, Approved Constitution for Synods, Approved Constitution for Congregations, Ordination Service, and Official Call to a Pastor.

1. *To Be*

First and foremost, this church expects its ordained ministers to be believing and practicing Christians, women and men who not only know about the Lord, but who know Jesus Christ as their Lord. They not only lead others in worship, prayer, and study of Scripture, but they are expected to be faithful and diligent in their own lives, evidencing trust in God. Ordained ministers are not isolated from the cares and concerns of human existence, but they constantly handle the gospel with its power to transform life. Their duty to be sensitive to sin and to speak God's reconciling grace keeps them conscious of this need to repent and to summon others to repentance, to accept forgiveness and to forgive, to be loved by God and to love. The LCA expects them, therefore, to understand, care for and love people, yet to be courageous in exposing sin and injustice.

Because the office is a focus for public attention and piety, and because it constantly handles sacred treasures, those in it are choice targets for temptation and pride. Therefore the church expects its ordained ministers to be accepting of counsel and guidance.

Further, the church expects ordained ministers to be committed to the work of the Ministry of Word and Sacraments for as long as they are able.¹³ While leaving the office is always possible, and may be a responsible decision, the normal anticipation is that service in this office will be for life.

2. *To Have*

The office requires high levels of competence and skill in carrying out its tasks. The church expects persons called by it to have intellectual ability. It expects them to have the capacity to teach teachers and lead leaders. It asks them to have skills in dealing with human and social needs.

A sound theological education is required of ordained ministers, for they are to know and interpret the Scriptures, Lutheran teachings, Christian mission, and church practices. They are to adhere to this church's confession of faith.

13. The LCA makes special provisions for continuing retired ordained ministers on its official clergy roll in recognition of their past service. Many continue to function at synodical request in supply and vice pastoral work.

Theological education is a life-long process, and the church rightly expects its ordained ministers continually to develop their abilities. Since the office involves preaching and teaching, its ministers are to be sound proclaimers and conscientious instructors. Its ordained ministers are to be knowledgeable about worship in order to lead in public services and to assist people in family and individual devotions. Because the Church is a complex of human relationships, its ordained persons are expected to have skills for counselling the distressed, ministering to the bereaved, organizing the church for mission, and motivating people and institutions to achieve justice.

3. *To Do*

Ordained ministers carry forward the work of the office in a variety of settings. A basic set of expectations involves their abilities to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments, conduct public worship, care for individuals and the congregation, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead. Ordained ministers are to inculcate piety in individual and family life and seek out qualified persons for service in the church's ministries. A number of oversight duties are also to be carried out, such as administering a congregation's schools and organizations, installing members of a church council, keeping adequate records, increasing the liberality of contributors to the work of synod and LCA, and the most difficult of all, administering discipline.

The expectations just listed are normally associated with the pastor of a congregation. Not all ordained ministers will be parish pastors throughout their ministries, but all are to meet these expectations as core qualifications. The particular duties which inhere in the several circumstances, are normally included in the respective call documents and appear in several pertaining constitutions.

Nor is the ministry of ordained persons limited to ecclesiastical functions or a proclamation of God's redemption. These ministers too have significant stations in the creation. They have personal roles as parents, or as neighbors, citizens and servants of the community. They are also looked upon as models for the way in which they serve in these relationships. In addition to these personal roles, they have institutional roles of

offering prayers on behalf of the community and its leaders, encouraging responsible citizenship and government service, helping the state understand the sovereign law of God, contributing to civic well-being while championing human and civil rights.¹⁴

Understanding Relationships between the Ministries of Lay and Ordained Persons

Given the array of forms and functions of the ministries of lay and ordained persons, how may we describe the relationship between them in the whole ministry of the people of God? Basically the relationship is one of unity in proclaiming the message and fulfilling the mission which God has given the Church. Ordained and lay ministers interact as partners in the one ministry of the gospel. Redeemed by Christ and incorporated in his Body through the Spirit, they join in serving and building up one another in the community of faith.

While the forms of these ministries all connect in practice and always converge in purpose, they may differ in the ways and places in which they are carried out. Different kinds of ministries need different types of preparation. Ordained ministers are expected to obtain a thorough theological education in order to be articulate in the proclamation and interpretation of the faith. Lay persons may also acquire such an education and a number do. Some carry out their vocations in professional positions in the church. Most lay persons, however, may look to the ordained ministers to engage them in the pertinent application of the Word in their lives. It is the task of theologically trained and authorized persons to take the lead in stating and developing the Church's teachings and practices.

Lay Christians may thereby concentrate their thought and energy on ways to apply those understandings in the world as they witness to God's love and work for God's justice. They translate the theological articulations of the faith into the language and experience of their families, neighbors and co-workers. They make the witness effective with words and actions which are fitting and understandable in each setting of their life. It is largely by these daily ministering

actions of lay persons that the world's inhabitants see and experience the creative power of God's Word. It is also mainly through lay persons that the concerns of these respective situations are in turn articulated to the whole people of God.

Strengthened by the diligent and regular use of the means of grace, lay persons are alert to ways in which they may offer the world Christian understandings and compassion. They also prepare to serve God and humanity by developing the particular experience, skills and knowledge needed for their several occupations. That preparation makes possible an individual's unique ministry to human community.

To be sure, ordained ministers also bring to the world the demands and mercies of God. When they speak and act in society, the human community regards them as being authorized by the Church to present Christian teachings and views. Ministers of Word and sacraments therefore address the world with the authority of that office which has continuity with the past and responsibility for the future as well as relevance in the present. Thus, taken together, the ministries of laity and clergy in creation are functionally complementary and mutually supportive.

Within the believing community as well, ordained and lay persons have distinctive functions in their partnership. Together they speak and enact the message of forgiveness within the Church. Together they worship and praise the God whom they serve. The Office of Word and Sacraments gives prominent roles to the ordained in proclaiming and teaching the Word, presiding at the administration of the sacraments. The office gives leadership in worship, in comforting the distressed, admonishing the unrepentant, and declaring God's forgiveness. It gives guidance in mission and inspires vision for the church. Lay persons participate in those actions. They console the distraught, encourage the weary, and support the needy. Lay persons carry forward the nurture of all members and the education of children, youth, and adults. They also become assisting ministers in the liturgy. Indeed, Holy Communion may be cited as an example of how the ministries of ordained and lay persons relate within the church. Presiding at the administration of the sacrament, the ordained person proclaims the Word which it expresses and is responsible for ensuring

14. LCA Statement on Church and State: A Lutheran Perspective.

that it be celebrated in accordance with that proclamation and the church's teaching and order. Lay persons are prominent as liturgists and join in administering the sacrament.

In addition to all these relationships, the partnership between ordained ministers and laity is evident in offices of the church filled by lay persons. One such office is that of church council members. They are officially responsible for overseeing worship, preaching, teaching and discipline; administration of congregational property, resources and programs; and assisting the ordained minister in caring for members, cultivating congregational harmony, promoting the welfare of the congregation, and furthering Christ's Kingdom at home and abroad. They are also expected to "show themselves in all things, by word and example, a pattern of good works."¹⁵

Another lay office is that of deaconess. In the LCA it is filled by women who commit themselves to lives of dedicated service and witness. They accept as their chief duties a partnership with ministers of the Word and sacraments for caring for the sick, poor and needy, for training youth, and reaching out to those who are alienated from God.¹⁶

There are other important and recognized positions in the church for lay persons, for example, those of certified and registered lay professionals, lay associates, synodical and other agency staff members. Greater clarity is needed in describing the relationships between them and clergy, and the relationships among the forms of lay ministry. The anticipated study is intended to assist in that effort.

Further, the relationship between the ministries of lay and ordained persons may be seen in the conduct of their lives in the church and society. The laity are expected to evidence a Christian life of loving service, humility and peace. As members of the whole church, the LCA and a particular congregation, lay Christians of all ages are to promote unity and welfare in their communities of faith, to support financially their congregations, synod and church, and to foster faithful care of brothers and sisters

in Christ.¹⁷

Because ordained ministers fill an office which is public, they vow with the Lord's help to adorn the doctrine of God by a holy life and conversation. They therefore are subject to the discipline of the church in manners different from lay persons. The causes and provisions related to such disciplinary actions are stated in the church's constitution and bylaws.

Because relationships between lay and ordained persons are so close, some of the distinctions between their ministries may become blurred. Since 1970 the Lutheran Church in America has used the words *representative* and *official* to help distinguish two dimensions of ministry.

The term *representative* describes the nature of a position in which a Christian "... represents by life, word and activity God's act of reconciliation in Christ."¹⁸ The post is a means through which the gospel is manifested in a public way. Both lay and ordained persons may carry on a representative ministry. In terms of this 1980 study, a representative position would be one through which persons fulfill publicly, competently and faithfully the actions described in the distinctive elements of ministry and the external marks of the Church.

The term *official* denotes the authorization given by the church to positions in which the church accepts responsibility. These positions also may be filled by either lay or ordained persons. The incumbents may be chosen by the church through election, appointment or call. The church has the right and obligation to establish standards, provide support, and give oversight for the ministering activities involved. The official dimension of a position ensures that the forms of ministry exercised therein will be continually related to the mission of the whole people of God and that Christians engaged in those forms will be guided by the church and accountable to it.

As stated by the 1970 report, when a position both publicly represents the gospel and is officially authorized by the church then it is an appropriate position to which the church may call an ordained person. This

15. "Order for the Installation of the Council or Governing Body of a Local Church," *The Occasional Services*, pp. 139-141. Note also the Approved Constitution for Congregations, Article IX.

16. "Order for the Setting Apart of a Deaconess," *The Occasional Services*, 1962.

17. Approved Constitution for Congregations, Article V, Section 3.

18. 1970 Commission Report, LCAM, p. 430, quoting a World Council of Churches paper, "The Meaning of Ordination," Sec. I.D.

means that not all official positions are representative, and not all representative positions are official, though each has its own integrity. When both dimensions are present, a Ministry of Word and Sacraments is indicated. This may be clarified for administrative purposes by the use of two criteria which reflect the present study's understanding of the Ministry of Word and Sacraments:

In order that the Ministry of Word and Sacraments may fulfill its purpose to establish, sustain and extend faith in Jesus Christ by proclaiming the message and fulfilling the mission given by God to the Church, a position may be considered part of that ministry if it 1) has recognized roles in carrying forward that purpose, and 2) is authorized for that purpose through the means which the church uses to maintain good order.

These criteria are offered in the interest of delineating and fulfilling the whole ministry of the people of God. Relationships between lay and ordained persons are strengthened and their ministries are made more effective when both unity and distinctiveness become natural. Admittedly, criteria, guidelines and procedures do not completely guarantee consistency or eliminate ambiguities. Policies, standards and processes are the imperfect but necessary means the church uses in its efforts to be a faithful and effective steward of the ministry given it by God. Indeed we must rely on the Spirit for guidance, humility, and enlightenment.

Conclusion

Ministry is God's Word in action through the whole people of God. Within that ministry of the universal priesthood there is one indispensable Office instituted by God to establish, sustain and extend faith in Jesus Christ. That office, the Ministry of Word and Sacraments, is holy and functional, has historical roots and is relevant today. This report has attempted to face several related issues squarely in order to present the challenges of ministry with candor and to indicate future developments.

The report is incomplete in regard to an explication of the ministry of the laity in the world and in the church, but it does recognize the fundamental wholeness of ministry and the basic functions of the Office of the Word and Sacraments within the ministry of the people of God.

Statement and Recommendations on
Ministry of the Workshop on
"Ordination, Mission and Ministry
in Latin America"
(Bogotá, August 14-16, 1980)

(Translated from the Spanish)

WORKSHOP ON "ORDINATION, MISSION AND MINISTRY IN LATIN AMERICA"

Bogotá, August 14-16, 1980

We, the participants at this Workshop, after study and consideration of its theme, agreed to submit to our churches some admonitions, conclusions and recommendations.

We believe it is our duty respectfully to ask the churches to remain aware of the following:

GENERAL REMARKS

1. There is a general ministry of the whole church which is part of its *raison d'être*. The New Testament shows that faith in the God of Jesus Christ necessarily expresses itself through ministries. Every baptized disciple is essentially a minister.
2. The general ministry has two dimensions: one internal, which is for building up the church itself, and the other external, directed towards society as testimony by word and deed; the two dimensions are inseparable.
3. With regard to ministry, two general features are found in the New Testament, namely, the royal or universal priesthood of all believers, and the special ministry of Word and sacraments (for the latter, cf. Article 5 of the Augsburg Confession).
4. Among God's people the Holy Spirit bestows various gifts thus making possible the building up of the church and its service to the world. We must not forget the teaching concerning gifts contained in the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers.
5. The special (ordained, apostolic) ministry is practised within the real or universal priesthood through proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments, through teaching and diakonia, in personal as well as social terms. The existence of Word and sacraments requires that there be the office of the ministry.
6. The task of the pastor, in addition to preaching the Word and administering the sacraments, is also to help the believers to discover their gifts, to create the proper structures for putting them into practice, and to provide the necessary equipping.
7. On the other hand, the special ministry becomes complete when the diversity of ordained ministries is expressed

in the oneness in the Spirit and in accordance with the necessities of the context. In the long Christian tradition this has already happened in connection with the diaconate and with teaching.

THE PRACTICE OF ORDINATION

1. It is recommended to continue the practice of ordination and the use of the term, because there are solid biblical and doctrinal bases for it. Ordination must be practised in the case of all special ministries (see item 7 above).
2. Ordination depends basically on the call and not necessarily on university studies, even though a basic theological education is indispensable. It is also recommended that all ordained ministries be involved in continuing theological education.
3. The following are indispensable requirements for ordination:
 - external and internal call
 - proper and specific preparation in accordance with the socio-cultural situation
 - spiritual and personal qualities
 - a period of practice and experience as time of probation (1 Timothy 3:1-3, Titus 1:5-9).
4. Ordination remains valid for an indeterminate time but is not necessarily life-long.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

In Latin America, one of the factors that stands in the way of the ministerial task is the economic one. The Workshop, however, recommends that we do not, for lack of financial means, cease to fulfil the mission with which God, through Jesus Christ, has entrusted us. It is necessary that we use our creativity to meet the needs of the churches. An example might be the creation of team ministries or the use of volunteer ministers.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHURCHES AND THE SIXTH LATIN AMERICAN LUTHERAN CONGRESS (Bogotá, August 17-23, 1980)

1. Recognizing that we could not cover all aspects of the Workshop's theme, we therefore recommend that the churches study the following aspects either on their own or jointly in another workshop:

- the ordination of women
 - the possible practical consequences of the new understanding of ministry for church structures
 - the coordination of the various ministries
 - the mutual recognition of ministries between different churches
 - the question of who is qualified to ordain.
2. It is recommended that the Department of Studies of the Lutheran World Federation cooperate in the organization of a workshop on "Worship and Liturgy" in the light of this understanding of the ministry and in the Latin American context.
 3. It is also recommended that the churches of Latin America study the following themes: charismatic gifts; the various forms of ministries, e.g. diaconal, pastoral, educational, according to the New Testament; and the local congregation. To accomplish these tasks the churches concerned may ask for the cooperation of the LWF Department of Studies or other organizations.
 4. In this connection, it is also recommended that the churches promote the use of the new study programme on ministry and ordination of the LWF Department of Studies.
 5. As this process has shown that many churches in Latin America have benefitted from study material on ministry and ordination produced by sister churches in Latin America and other parts of the world, it is therefore recommended that the LWF Department of Studies encourage the exchange of such material and, if necessary, offer its help in practical questions.

II. ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

An important contribution to today's debate about ministry is to be found in the considerable material that comes from the so-called ecumenical conversations. These take many different forms and are carried out at different levels.

A useful overview will be found in *Confessions in Dialogue; A Survey of Bilateral Conversations among World Confessional Families 1959-1974*, by Nils Ehrenström and Günther Gassmann; third, revised and enlarged edition by Nils Ehrenström. It was published by the World Council of Churches in Geneva in 1975.

Reprinted below is first a section from *Ecumenical Relations of the Lutheran World Federation*, published by the LWF in Geneva in 1977. This booklet includes a survey of the bilateral conversations that Lutherans have been engaged in up to 1977. The report refers to the "Malta Report" adopted by Lutherans and Roman Catholics (1971), and the "Pullach Report" adopted by Lutherans and Anglicans (1973). The sections dealing with ministry in these statements are also reprinted below. The full texts are to be found in Vol. XIX, Nos. 3 and 4 of *Lutheran World*/72. The "Pullach Report" is reprinted also in *Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations* published by the SPCK in London in 1973.

In *Confessions in Dialogue* a brief reference is made to *One Baptism, One Eucharist, and a Mutually Recognized Ministry; Three agreed statements*, published by the World Council of Churches as Faith and Order Paper No. 73 in 1975. This is the so-called Accra Report of 1974.

Unfortunately for reasons of space we can reprint here only a brief excerpt of the long section on the ministry (pp.29-60) in Faith and Order Paper No. 73. The three reports in this paper on baptism, eucharist and ministry "are an attempt to summarize the measure of agreement already achieved in the Faith and Order movement" (Preface, p. 5). Also "it should be noted that these three reports do not represent a consensus in the full sense of that word. What they provide is rather a summary of shared convictions and perspectives. ... The reports deal only with those aspects of these themes which are directly or indirectly related to the question of mutual recognition" (ibid., pp.6-7).

However, on pp.60f. it is also pointed out that "(t)he statement on the ordained ministry is somewhat different in nature from the other two. Rather than a summary of the agreements reached at ecumenical conferences, it is an attempt to survey the present ecumenical debate on the ordained ministry and to indicate the emerging common perspectives which may

lead to the agreement required for the full mutual recognition of the ministries."

In Faith and Order Paper No. 84, *Towards an Ecumenical Consensus on Baptism, the Eucharist and the Ministry*, the World Council of Churches has later given an account of the churches' reactions to the Accra document and the various responses of the WCC to these. Two sections dealing with ministry are reprinted below.

Daniel F. Martensen has given a survey of these Lutheran and other responses to the Accra document in "A Call to Consensus", *LWF Report 8*, 1980. A few pages from this survey are reprinted below. In *LWF Documentation 3*, 1980, he has also given an overview concerning the most recent developments, along with a synopsis of documentation and a calendar of the dialogues taking place at present.

The last item from the ecumenical conversations included here is a statement that came out of the theological conversations between representatives of the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic traditions in the United States. It was published as the first chapter in *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV: Eucharist and Ministry*, edited by Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy, Minneapolis, 1979.

FROM:

*Ecumenical Relations of the Lutheran World
Federation*, Lutheran World Federation, Geneva,
1977

(Available from the LWF Secretariat for Interconfessional Dialogue and Ecumenical Research)

THE MINISTRY

a) Role and Place of the Ministry in the Three Reports

In the Malta Report and the Pullach Report the questions of the ordained ministry and the aspects associated with it (e.g. apostolic succession, ordination, episcopacy, mutual recognition) occupy a rather important place. This is explained by the fact that the ministry has been and is still a major controversial point between the dialogue partners. On the Roman Catholic and Anglican side (on the latter side, of course, with different opinions according to "church-manship") there exists in fact a non-recognition of Lutheran ministries with a number of consequences. Therefore, the aim of the dialogue in this area is to prepare the way for mutual recognition.

In the Leuenberger Agreement the question of the ministry is practically absent since it has not belonged to those convictions which were regarded as church-dividing. Yet, since the LA is not limited to former church-dividing issues, some commentators have criticized the omission of a paragraph on the ministry. This they regard as an indication of the fact that the drafters of the LA did not see the ministry as an essential point which should be part of such an agreement. In a way the ministry question is, nevertheless, included in the whole Leuenberger process by the provision that in the continuing doctrinal conversations "ministry and ordination" will be one of the main topics (39).

A comparison concerning statements on the ministry is therefore only possible between the Malta Report and the Pullach Report. At some point short references to the Anglican/Catholic Canterbury Statement and to the Lutheran/Catholic (USA) Report on "Eucharist and Ministry" will be added.

b) The Theological Context of Dealing with the Ministry

The Malta Report and the Pullach Report are similar in so far as they form a coherent text which incorporates a number of main issues. They are not dealing with isolated items. Accordingly, in the Pullach Report the discussion on the ministry is then approached through the issue of apostolicity and apostolic succession. The Malta Report is more limited in the number of topics, but by emphasizing the gospel as the decisive criterium for all other questions it is able to interrelate its selected topics even more thoroughly than the Pullach Report. Accordingly the question of the ministry is approached and discussed in the perspective of the preceding affirmations about the gospel. Regarding the question of the ministry via apostolicity or via gospel - these are legitimate alternatives which, at a closer look, reveal themselves as two sides of the same coin. The approach in the Malta Report is more in the line with traditional Lutheran thinking.

c) Common Aspects of the Ministry in the Pullach Report and the Malta Report

The paragraphs on the ministry in the two reports do not seek to present a full and detailed presentation of the topic. They focus on controversial aspects in the context of basic convictions and pre-suppositions. Certain aspects are taken up in both reports, others are discussed only in one or the other of the two reports. First, the parallel treatment of identical aspects will be presented here.

aa) Foundation or Institution of the Special/Ordained Ministry

The Malta Report links the foundation of ministry to the gospel because the "witness of the gospel requires that there be witnesses to the gospel" (48). In a second line of argument the emergence of a special ministry in NT times is connected with the apostles as the foundation of the church and the charisms which are given to the whole church (51-54). The Pullach Report stresses more this second line of thought, combining the theological and historical in one single sentence: the ministry "was instituted by God through Jesus Christ in the sending of the apostles" (75). Both reports understand this ministry primarily as a ministry of Word and Sacrament. They describe its institution and exercise in close interrelation with the service of the whole People of God.

The different approaches can be regarded as complementary.

Note: The Canterbury Statement and the USA Report on "Eucharist and Ministry" contain no statements which contradict these approaches.

bb) Apostolic Succession

The Malta Report and the Pullach Report take a similar starting-point: apostolic succession is primarily expressed through the apostolicity of the whole church, being faithful to the apostolic witness. The dynamic, comprehensive character of this apostolic succession of the whole church and the variety of means for its expression and preservation through time is stressed in the Pullach Report (73-75), while the Malta Report argues more historically (57 and 58). The special role of ministerial succession in this context is seen by Catholics as a "sign of the unimpaired transmission of the gospel and a sign of unity in the faith". Lutherans are reported as granting the importance of such a succession if succession in teaching remains preeminent and succession in ministry is not regarded as "an *ipso facto* certain guarantee of the continuity of the right proclamation of the gospel" (57).

The Pullach Report sees in the use of a ministry of Word and Sacraments, of pastoral care and oversight one of the several means through which the "succession of apostolicity through time is guarded and given contemporary expression" (74).

While both reports have not specified the kind of ministry which forms part of the apostolic succession, the Pullach Report adds an important statement by saying that all who have been called and ordained to the ministry in obedience to the apostolic faith "stand together in the succession of office" (77).

In their own statement in the Pullach Report, Anglicans underline the common affirmations by denying that "the episcopate in historic succession alone constitutes the apostolic succession of the Church or its ministry" (85), yet at the same time asserting that episcopacy in historic succession is "an outward and visible sign of the Church's continuing unity and apostolic life, mission, and ministry" (84).

Anglican reactions to the Pullach Report indicate, however, that this assertion of the historic episcopate still remains a problem for further Anglican/Lutheran discussion. In a similar direction, though as yet not as positive, points the paragraph in the Malta Report which mentions the fact of some ordinations of priests in the Catholic tradition, but leaves it to further discussion whether this has relevance for the possibility of a presbyterial succession (58).

Despite differences in presentation a similar position is expressed both in the Malta Report and the Pullach Report.

Note: In the Canterbury Statement and the USA Report "Eucharist and Ministry", a similar concept of apostolicity and apostolic succession is apparent, although in the Canterbury Statement the role of episcopal succession is expressed in somewhat stronger terms ("ensure", "symbolise", "maintain").

cc) Ordination

Since both reports do not offer a full description of ordination, each of them mentions elements which are lacking in the other. The Pullach Report stresses God's action in ordination through the whole church, the authority given through ordination, prayer and laying on of hands and the special ministers of ordination (78). The Malta Report deals with the sacramental character of ordination (in the same way as the USA Report) and mentions laying on of hands and invocation of the Holy Spirit (59). It also points to the fact that both churches do not repeat ordination (60). These statements are complementary.

Note: The USA Report "Eucharist and Ministry" and the Canterbury Statement offer a fuller exposition of ordination, whereby in the latter episcopal ordination is taken for granted. As far as a comparison is at all possible, contradiction cannot be detected.

dd) Mutual Recognition

In the Pullach Report, the recognition of Lutheran ministries as a truly apostolic ministry is justified by the Anglican delegates in pointing to the fact, "that they see in the Lutheran Communion true proclamation of the Word and celebration of the Sacraments" and that the "Anglican Communion has been much influenced and blessed by God through the Lutheran Communion's faithfulness to the apostolic Gospel". As a consequence they "gladly recognize in the Lutheran church a true communion of Christ's Body, possessing a truly apostolic ministry" (85). Two further consequences are drawn by the Anglican delegates: 1) Such recognition, if reciprocal, would allow for some form of official intercommunion (86). 2) Full integration of ministries would not be possible apart from the historic episcopate (87). At this second point a difference to the Lutheran position is still apparent.

In a similar way the Lutheran participants base their recognition of Anglican ministries on the ecclesiological argument; because they see in the churches of the Anglican Communion true proclamation of the gospel and right administration of the sacraments, they are able to recognize these churches "as true apostolic churches and their ministry as an apostolic ministry in unbroken succession" (90). As a consequence they point to intercommunion and, where expedient, to exchange of ministers or full church union (91).

Because of the different background, mentioned above, the Malta Report argues more cautiously. Catholic participants request their authorities to examine the question of the recognition of Lutheran ministries. They base this request on the recognition of the ecclesial character of non-Roman Catholic churches by Vatican II, the emergency situation of the Reformation period, considerations of the charismatic origin of ministries and of the possibility of a presbyterial succession (63).

Lutheran participants point to the fact that on the basis of their main criteria - true proclamation of the Gospel and right administration of the sacraments - they have never "denied the existence of the office of the ministry in the Roman Catholic Church". They stress, however, that in view of recent changes in the Roman Catholic understanding and practice of the ministry and other convergencies the Lutheran Church should seriously examine the question of an explicit recognition of the Roman Catholic ministerial office (64).

Both reports are looking towards mutual recognition of ministries. They do this, however, in a different manner which has its reason in the different histories and the different doctrinal positions which lay behind these two dialogues. Nevertheless, the approach in the Pullach Report seems to be preferable since both parties base mutual recognition on the same, common presuppositions. The Catholic argument in the Malta Report for recognition, on the other hand, is partly based on considerations (emergency situation, etc.) which are not necessarily shared by Lutherans.

Note : The Canterbury Statement does not take up the question of recognition. The USA Report requests similarly to the Malta Report serious consideration of mutual recognition. As in the Malta Report and the Pullach Report, it bases this request on ecclesiological recognition, whereby for the Lutherans again true proclamation of the Gospel and right administration of the sacraments are the decisive criteria.

d) Distinct Aspects in the Two Reports

Each of the two reports takes up aspects of the ministry which are not dealt with or only touched on in the other report. The fact that in neither is a full treatment of the question of the ministry given and that in both the particular "constellation" of the two partners required a concentration on particular points was certainly the reason for this.

Such aspects are e.g. in the Malta Report: Relationship between ordained ministry and community (50) (similar in the Canterbury Statement and the USA Report); the emergence of the ministry and ministerial structures in the NT and in post-apostolic times (52-56) (similar in the Canterbury Statement and the USA Report); the priestly character of the ministry (60) (the Canterbury Statement is more positive about the priestly aspects of the ministry). The distinct aspect in the Pullach Report is a rather heavy concentration on the question of episcopacy (79-90). (With regard to the element of *episcopē* there are strong similarities between the Malta Report and the Canterbury Statement).

e) Summary

1. In general one could say that in the different reports a basically consistent Lutheran position can be observed.
2. There are no contradictions, but differences of approach, selection of aspects and emphases in the Pullach Report, the Malta Report and the USA Report, while the Canterbury Statement contains statements which should be evaluated and compared in more detail with the USA Report, but also here similarities are stronger than differences.
3. The Lutheran position as it is reflected in these reports is certainly in continuity with basic Reformation convictions. Yet in addition to this, there have emerged questions like apostolic succession, *episcopē* and episcopate, and priestly character of the ministry where Lutherans are confronted with theological considerations which have so far occupied no prominent place in their theological tradition.

FROM:

"Report of the Joint Lutheran/Roman Catholic
Study Commission on 'The Gospel and the Church'
(*'Malta Report'*), *Lutheran World*, Vol. XIX, No.3,
1972, pp. 259ff.

THE GOSPEL AND THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH¹⁶

A) *The common point of departure*

(47) The question of the office of the ministry in the church, its origin, its position and correct understanding represents one of the most important open questions between Lutherans and Catholics. It is here that the question of the position of the gospel in and over the church becomes concrete. What, in other words, are the consequences of the doctrine of justification for the understanding of the ministerial office?

(48) Lutherans and Catholics share the conviction that we owe our salvation exclusively to the saving act of God accomplished once for all in Jesus Christ according to the witness of the gospel. Yet the ministry of reconciliation belongs to the work of reconciliation.¹⁷ In other words the witness of the gospel requires that there be witnesses to the gospel.¹⁸ The church as a whole bears witness to Christ; the church as a whole is the priestly people of God.¹⁹ As *creatura et ministra verbi*, however, it stands under the gospel and has the gospel as its superordinate criterion. Its gospel ministry is to be carried out through the proclamation of the word, through the administration of the sacraments, and, indeed, through its total life.

(49) Since the church as the pilgrim people of God has not yet reached its eschatological goal, it depends during the present interval of time—between the “already” and the “not-yet” on ministries, structures and orders which should serve the realization of the saving act of God in Christ.

(50) The correct determination of the relationship between this ministry assigned to the entire church and a special office in the church is a problem for Lutherans and Catholics alike. Both agree that the office of the ministry stands over against the community as well as within the community. Further they agree that the ministerial office represents Christ and his over-againstness to the community only insofar as it gives expression to the gospel. Both must examine themselves as to how effectively the critical superiority of the gospel is maintained in practice.

B) *The normative position of its origin*

(51) The New Testament testifies to these points in many ways. Especially important and helpful for our present problem is the concept of the apostolic as well as the charismatic structure of the congregations as portrayed especially in Paul's letters.²⁰

(52) According to the New Testament wit-

nesses the apostles were sent by the Lord himself as witnesses of his resurrection.²¹ The apostolate in the strict sense is not transferable. The apostles belong to the time of the original establishment of the church,²² are of fundamental importance for the church,²³ and—together with the Christian prophets—can be designated as the foundation of the church.²⁴ The church is apostolic insofar as it stands on this foundation and abides in the apostolic faith. The church's ministry, doctrine and order are apostolic insofar as they pass on and actualize the apostolic witness.

(53) The commission of the whole church, going back to the apostles, is carried out through a variety of charisms. These are manifestations of the Holy Spirit and make us participants in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.²⁵ Therefore the charisms are not given to only a particular group in the church nor are they limited only to its offices.²⁶ They exhibit their authenticity in that they testify to Christ²⁷ and are for others, thus serving the unity and building-up of the body of Christ.²⁸ Therefore the charisms are of constitutive importance for the order and structure of the church. The gospel can be maintained only in the cooperative and at times also tension-filled interaction of the various charisms and ministries.²⁹

(54) We are told quite early in the New Testament period of special ministries and offices.³⁰ To some extent at least they were viewed as charisms.³¹ The New Testament writings testify to the great differences in congregational functions, ministries and orders in the various areas and periods of the church. These were only partially retained in later church history and they were partially interpreted in new ways (cf. the offices of presbyter, bishop and deacon). Further, these ministries and orders were imbedded in earlier historical (Jewish, Hellenistic, etc.) structures. Thus, although there is a continuity of basic structure, it can be seen that historicity is part of the essential nature of the church's ministerial office and of its congregational ordering. The gospel as witnessed to by Scripture can be criterion for church order only when it stands in living relationship to the current social realities. Orders in the New Testament are, therefore, to be seen largely as models which are open to ever new actualizations.

C) *Historical development of church structures*

(55) During the course of the church's history, the understanding and shaping of the ministerial office has undergone considerable

change and development. Only in recent years have we become fully aware of this in our study of history. It was not until the second century that the three-fold division of the ministerial office into bishop, presbyter and deacon finally came about. The relationship of the local to the universal church, of episcopal collegiality to primacy, shifted significantly between the first and second millennia. To some extent the various churches are differentiated by their development of differing New Testament models.

(56) These insights into the historicity of the church, combined with a new understanding of the eschatological nature of the church, have led also to changes in the theological understanding of the office of the ministry in the church. Although the ministerial office belongs constitutively to the church and has a continuing basic structure, still it is possible for concrete forms of office, which were necessary and important at a specific time for the proper carrying out of the church's mission, to be of no or little value in other situations. This enables us today also to undertake restructuring in order to adapt to new situations. In so doing, old structures, as for example, the office of deacon, can be renewed and new structures can emerge. Especially is there great need today to consider the prophetic function of the church towards the world and the structural consequences of this for the church. The exercise of the prophetic function demands an area of freedom and of public opinion within the church.

D) *The understanding of apostolic succession*

(57) The basic intention of the doctrine of apostolic succession is to indicate that, throughout all historical changes in its proclamation and structures, the church is at all times referred back to its apostolic origin. The details of this doctrine seem to us today to be more complicated than before. In the New Testament and the early fathers, the emphasis was obviously placed more on the substance of apostolicity, i.e., on succession in apostolic teaching. In this sense the entire church as the *ecclesia apostolica* stands in the apostolic succession. Within this general sense of succession, there is a more specific meaning: the succession of the uninterrupted line of the transmission of office. In the early church, primarily in connection with defence against heresies, it was a sign of the unimpaired transmission of the gospel and a sign of unity in the faith. It is in these terms that Catholics today are trying once again to develop a deeper understanding of apostolic succession in the ministerial office. Lutherans on their side can grant the importance of a special succession if the preeminence of succession in teaching is recognized and if the uninterrupted line of transmission of office is not viewed as an *ipso facto* certain guarantee of the continuity of the right proclamation of the gospel.

(58) It can also be of ecumenical importance to indicate that the Catholic tradition knows of individual instances of the ordination of

priests by priests which were recognized as valid. It still needs to be clarified to what extent this leaves open the possibility of a presbyterial succession.³²

E) *Toward a new interpretation of the traditional teaching on the ministerial office*

(59) Today it is possible for us to have a better understanding of various traditional elements in the doctrine of the office of the ministry as this has developed on both sides. We see more clearly than before that the question of whether ordination is a sacrament is chiefly a matter of terminology. Catholics view ordination as a sacrament which graciously equips the office bearer for ministry to others. Lutherans customarily limit usage of the word "sacrament" to baptism and the Lord's Supper (at times also absolution).³³ In practice, however, transmission of office proceeds in both churches in a similar manner, that is, through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit for his gifts for the proper exercise of ministry. In spite of all still remaining differences, there is here a substantial convergence.

(60) A certain rapprochement can be noticed also because of a change in the Catholic understanding of "priestly character". According to the original Augustinian understanding, this had to do with the outward call and ordination to public office in the church. Later, however, there was a shift to understanding this "character" as an inner qualification of the person, and it was in this sense that it was rejected by the Reformers. In defence against a onesided metaphysical understanding, many Catholic theologians today emphasize a more strongly functional conception which is more acceptable to Lutherans. Furthermore, Lutherans in practice have the equivalent of the Catholic doctrine of the "priestly character" to the extent that they do not repeat ordination. In both churches, to be sure, there is also the problem of how the preeminence of the gospel can be made effective within the historically developed official structures.

(61) The Second Vatican Council has emphasized in a new way that the basic task of priests is the proclamation of the gospel. Further, it is stressed in the administration of the sacraments that these are sacraments of the faith which are born from the word and nourished by the word.³⁴ According to the Lutheran Confessions, it is the task of the ministerial office to proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments in accordance with the gospel, so that in this way faith is awakened and strengthened.³⁵ Over against an earlier onesided emphasis on proclamation, the sacraments in the Lutheran churches are currently coming to have a more important place in the spiritual life of the congregations.

(62) On the basis of these findings it seems necessary to examine whether the still remaining differences on these and related questions must necessarily be viewed as church-dividing differences in faith, or wheth-

er they can be understood as the expression of different ways of thinking. While Lutherans emphasize more the "event" character of God's saving acts, Catholic tradition is more concerned about the metaphysical implications of statements about salvation. These two ways of thinking are not mutually exclusive insofar as they do not become self-contained and orientate themselves in terms of the critical norm of the gospel.

F) The possibility of a mutual recognition of the ministerial office

(63) The Catholic participants are convinced in view of recent biblical and historical insights as well as on the basis of the ecumenical experience of the working of the Holy Spirit in other churches, that the traditional rejection of the validity of the Lutheran ministerial office must be rethought. The recognition of the ecclesial character of other church communities, as expressed by Vatican II,³⁶ can be, theologically speaking, interpreted as a first step toward the recognition of the ministerial offices of these churches. Also worthy of note is the point that the ministerial office arose in Lutheran churches through a spiritual break-through in an emergency situation. Reconsideration of the doctrine of apostolic succession and reflection on ministries of charismatic origin as well as on presbyterial succession seem to permit a correction of the traditional point of view. Therefore, the Catholic members request the appropriate authorities in the Roman Catholic Church to consider whether the ecumenical urgency flowing from Christ's will for unity does not demand that the Roman Catholic Church examine seriously the question of recognition of the Lutheran ministerial office.

(64) The question of recognition of the ministry is viewed differently by Lutherans because they never denied the existence of the office of the ministry in the Roman Catholic Church. According to the Lutheran confessional position, the church exists wherever the gospel is preached in its purity and the sacraments are rightly administered.³⁷ Lutheran confessional writings leave no doubt that the one church has never ceased to exist, and they also emphasize the churchly character of the Roman Catholic communion. Also, changes in the understanding and practice of the Roman Catholic ministerial office, especially the stronger emphasis on the *ministerium verbi*, has largely removed the reasons for the reformers' criticism. The awareness of a common responsibility for the proclamation of the gospel in the world should impel the Lutheran churches also to examine seriously the question of the explicit recognition of the Roman Catholic ministerial office. Because of the already noted similarities in the understanding of the gospel, which has decisive effects on proclamation, administration of the sacraments and liturgical practice, the Lutherans feel that even now exchange of pulpits and common eucharistic celebrations can on occasion be recommended.³⁸

NOTES

- 16 The most complete treatment of this theme so far within the context of Catholic-Lutheran conversations has taken place in North America. See *Eucharist and Ministry, Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV* (New York: USA National Committee of the LWF; Washington: US Catholic Conference, 1971).
- 17 2 Cor. 5:18.
- 18 Rom. 10:14-17.
- 19 Cf. Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 10-12; Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 2-3; also *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia Edition), "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility", p. 52 (WA 6, 407); cf. further WA 38, 247.
- 20 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 28-30; Rom. 12:6-8; cf. Eph. 4:7-12.
- 21 1 Cor. 9:1; Acts 1:22.
- 22 1 Cor. 15:7.
- 23 1 Cor. 3:10ff.
- 24 Eph. 2:20; cf. Rev. 21:14.
- 25 Cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-6.
- 26 Cf. 2 Cor. 12:7-11; Rom. 12:3.
- 27 Cf. 1 Cor. 12:3.
- 28 Cf. Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11-16.
- 29 Cf. Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 12.
- 30 Cf. 1 Thess. 5:12; Phil. 1:1.
- 31 Cf. 1 Cor. 12:28.

- 32 Cf. C. Baisi, *Il Ministro straordinario degli ordini sacramentali* (Rome: 1935); Y. Congar, *Heilige Kirche* (Stuttgart: Schwabenverlag, 1966), pp. 285-316; P. Fransen, in *Sacramentum Mundi*, IV, 1969, col. 1270f; W. Kasper, "Zur Frage der Anerkennung der Ämter in den lutherischen Kirchen", in *Theol. Quartalschrift* (Tübingen), Vol. 151, 1971, pp. 97-109.
- 33 Cf. Augsburg Confession, XIII, and Apology of the Augsburg Confession, XIII.
- 34 See Vatican II, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, 4.
- 35 Cf. Augsburg Confession V; VII.
- 36 Cf. Decree on Ecumenism, 3f; 19.
- 37 Cf. Augsburg Confession, VII.
- 38 Cf. nos. 68-74 of this report.

FROM:

"Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International
Conversations 1970-1972 ('Pullach Report'),
Lutheran World, Vol. XIX, No. 4, 1972, pp. 387ff.

(Reprinted also in *Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations*, published by the SPCK in London in 1973)

THE MINISTRY

(75) In confessing the apostolic faith as a community, all baptized and believing Christians are the apostolic church and stand in the succession of apostolic faith. The apostolic ministry which was instituted by God through Jesus Christ in the sending of the apostles is shared in varying ways by the members of the whole body.

(76) The ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament is essentially one, though it assumes a diversity of forms which have varied from New Testament times, and which still vary according to local conditions and historic influences down to the present.

(77) We feel ourselves called to recognize that all who have been called and ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in obedience to the apostolic faith stand together in the apostolic succession of office.

(78) It is God who calls, ordains and sends the ministers of Word and Sacrament in the church. He does this through the whole people, acting by means of those who have been given authority so to act in the name of God and of the whole church. Ordination to the ministry gives authority to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments according to Christ's command and promise, for the purpose of the continuance of the apostolic life and mission of the church. Ordination includes the prayer of all the people and the laying on of hands of other ministers, especially of those who occupy a ministry of oversight and unity in the church.

EPISCOPACY

(79) "Episcopate" or oversight concerning the purity of apostolic doctrine, the ordination of ministries, and pastoral care of the church is inherent in the apostolic character of the church's life, mission and ministry. This has been embodied and exercised in the church in a wide variety of forms, episcopal and non-episcopal. Both Communion have continuously held and exercised oversight in accordance with their respective understandings of church order.

(80) In the Lutheran Communion episcopacy has been preserved in some parts in unbroken succession, in other parts in succession of office, while in other parts oversight has been exercised in non-episcopal forms. In all forms it has experienced the blessings of the ministry in the church.

(81) In the Anglican Communion episcopacy has been preserved in a succession unbroken at the time of the Reformation and, rightly or wrongly, important deductions have been drawn from this in relation to the organic continuity and unity of the church.

(82) Both Communion are open to new forms in which episcopate may find expressions appropriate to the needs and conditions of the situation and time.

PARTICULAR CONVICTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF EACH COMMUNION

Statement of the Anglican participants:

(83) Anglicans treasure the historic episcopate as part of their own history and because of their belief in the incarnational and sacramental character of God's involvement with the world and his people. As God acts now in and through words spoken, in and through bread and wine, and in and through the reality of human community, so too he acts in the laying on of hands in historic succession, providing for the ministry of Word and Sacrament in the one church.

(84) They believe that the episcopacy in historic continuity and succession is a gift of God to the church. It is an outward and visible sign of the church's continuing unity and apostolic life, mission and ministry. They hold this belief while recognizing that episcopacy has been and may be abused in the life of the church, as have been the other media of apostolic succession.

(85) Anglicans do not believe that the episcopate in historic succession alone constitutes the apostolic succession of the church or its ministry. The participants wish to declare that they see in the Lutheran Communion true proclamation of the Word and celebration of the sacraments. How we are able to make this statement while maintaining our adherence to the importance of the historic episcopate we hope the Anglican personal note (see section IV) will make clear. The Anglican Communion has been much influenced and blessed by God through the Lutheran Communion's faithfulness to the apostolic gospel. We, therefore, gladly recognize in the Lutheran churches a true communion of Christ's body, possessing a truly apostolic ministry.

(86) Such recognition, if reciprocated by the Lutheran churches, implies, according to the mind of the participants, official encouragement of intercommunion in forms appropriate to local conditions.

(87) The Anglican participants cannot foresee full integration of ministries (full communion) apart from the historic episcopate, but this should in no sense preclude increasing intercommunion between us, which would give fuller and more joyful expression to our unity in Christ, recognize and deepen the similarities which bind us together, and provide the most appropriate context for our common service of the one Lord.

Statement of the Lutheran participants:

(88) The Lutheran churches have practised full fellowship with each other regardless of the forms of episcopate (or even of the episcopate). With ecumenical developments this freedom for fellowship has allowed Lutheran churches to enter into fellowship with non-Lutheran churches with various forms of church government.

(89) Since full fellowship has been retained between some Lutheran churches which have not preserved the office and name of a bishop and other Lutheran churches which have retained the historic episcopate in a form similar to the Anglican and since the particular form of episcopate is not a confessional question for Lutherans, the historic episcopate should not become a necessary condition for interchurch relations or church union. On the other hand, those Lutheran churches which have not retained the historic episcopate are free to accept it where it serves the growing unity of the church in obedience to the gospel.

(90) The Lutheran participants in these conversations recognize the churches of the Anglican Communion as true apostolic churches and their ministry as an apostolic ministry in unbroken succession, because they see in them true proclamation of the gospel and right administration of the sacraments. As would be true for any church which proclaims the gospel in its purity and administers the sacraments properly the participants regard the historic episcopacy as it has been retained in the Anglican Communion as an important instrument of the unity of the church.

(91) The Lutheran participants in these conversations recommend to the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation that they work for a still closer fellowship with the churches of the Anglican Communion, including at the present time intercommunion. Where it is expedient for furthering the mission of the church and where it can happen without disturbing already existing relations with other churches, Lutheran churches must be free to manifest a mutual recognition of ministries through the exchange of ministers or through full church union.

FROM:

*One Baptism, One Eucharist, and a Mutually
Recognized Ministry; Three agreed statements,
Faith and Order Paper No. 73, Geneva, 1975*

(Available from Faith and Order, World Council of Churches,
Geneva, Switzerland)

THE MINISTRY

Preamble

1. All ministry in the Church is to be understood in the light of him who came "not to be served but to serve" (Mark 10 : 45). It is he who said : "As my Father has sent me, even so I send you" (John 20 : 21). Thus, our calling in Christ constrains us to a costly, dedicated and humble involvement in the needs of mankind. Only so we may understand the whole ministry of the people of God, and only so the character of the special ministry of those who are called and set apart to serve and equip the Church by their stewardship of the mysteries of Christ.

I. The Ordained Ministry and the Christian Community

2. The ordained ministry is to be understood as part of the community. An understanding of the ministry must therefore start from the nature of the Church, the community of believers. This conviction is now shared by most of the Churches. Thus the following considerations start from the Christian community ; they then try to define the nature and functions of the ordained ministry in the light of this community.

A. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

3. The Lord Jesus Christ, through his Word and Spirit, forgives sins and delivers men from the lordship of the powers of destruction ; He continues to gather worshipping communities out of this broken world, the one people of God, coming from the water of baptism ; He builds them up through Word and Sacrament.

4. Membership in the community of the Church involves fellowship with God the Father through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. It means being in a relationship of mutual indwelling with Jesus Christ. This

fellowship makes possible a unique experience of community, based as it is upon communion with God and repentance, upon mutual forgiveness and acceptance ; it results in freedom and new life. God's purpose is that all men should be brought into this community.

5. Among the marks of this community, apostolicity has a central place for the understanding of the ministry. Christ is the true apostle whom God, in the Holy Spirit, sent into the world. Through him the world is reconciled to the Father in the communion of the Holy Spirit. The Apostles whom Christ chose and sent to continue this mission of reconciliation, are the foundations of the community created by the Spirit. To this community Christ gave the authority to accomplish the apostolic mission. The Holy Spirit realizes this mission by communicating and manifesting himself in this community.

6. The apostolicity of the Church is thus rooted in Christ's mission and inseparably bound to the fullness of the witness and service of the apostles. The Christian community must constantly strive to be faithful to this witness and service, yet its apostolicity is sustained primarily by Christ's continued presence in it through the activity of the Holy Spirit.

7. The Christian community always exists in a concrete sociological setting. Therefore, it cannot be described adequately in general theological terms. As we reflect on the nature of the community and on the place of the special ministry in the community its actual sociological appearance must be taken into account. Obviously, the forms of the community have changed in the course of history ; and as the special ministry is to serve the community in its concrete form, the patterns of the ministry have changed and must change as well.

8. In the 20th century, for example, geographical areas no longer delineate certain social entities as they once did. Urbanization and the modern organization of society continue to develop ; owing to the characteristic mobility, dispersal and specialization of this society, persons tend to belong to several communities simultaneously, no one of which is primarily geographically defined. This development is tending more and more to be true of continuing "rural" societies as well.¹

9. No doubt the traditional groupings of people and pastor in a relatively homogeneous neighbourhood, where such exist and are authentic, will continue to be important and living expressions of the Church. In our day, however, Christian people have membership in a number of diverse communities, outside as well as inside the Christian fellowship. The great mobility characteristic of our time makes possible

¹ *Louvain 1971*, Faith and Order report on "The Ordained Ministry" in study reports and documents. Geneva : WCC 1971, p. 89.

many new groupings of Christians on non-geographic bases. Many fruitful ministries are emerging in such new communities.

10. Christ sends his Church into the world to participate in his ministry of reconciliation and liberation, and membership in these diverse communities forces many pressing human concerns into the centre of the Christian fellowship. The Church should take the needs, worries and hopes of its surrounding culture seriously ; these can become the concern of the whole of the Christian fellowship. The daily scattering of disciples throughout this variety of communities provides new opportunities for them to participate in movements of human fulfilment, liberation, "consciousness-raising" and service. Through these groups too Christ is building up his kingdom in the hearts of men "to unite all things in him".

B. THE MINISTRY OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD

11. The Church as the communion of the Holy Spirit is called to proclaim and prefigure the Kingdom of God by announcing the Gospel to the world and by being built up as the body of Christ. Within these two commissions each member of the body is called to live his faith and account for his hope. Each stands alongside men and women in their joy and suffering and witnesses among them through loving service ; each struggles with the oppressed towards that freedom and dignity promised with the coming of the Kingdom.

12. This proclamation of the Gospel, service to the world and edification of the community require a variety of activities, both permanent and provisional, spontaneous and institutional. To fulfil these needs the Holy Spirit gives diverse and complementary gifts to the Church. These gifts are given by God to individuals for the common good of his people and their service and manifest themselves in acts of service within the Christian community and to the world. They are all gifts of the same Spirit. The ordained ministry, therefore, cannot be understood or carried out in isolation from the general ministry of the whole people.

C. THE BASIS AND FUNCTION OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

13. In order that his redemptive work might be proclaimed and attested to the ends of the earth, and that its fruits might be communicated to man, Christ chose apostles and committed to them the word of reconciliation.² Within the first Christian communities the apostles exercised a unique and fundamental function, which could not be handed on. However, in so far as they bore special (but not exclusive)

² *The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order*. Report from Montreal, 1963. London : SCM, 1964, para 84, p. 63.

responsibility for proclaiming the message of reconciliation, establishing churches and building them up in the apostolic faith, their ministry had to be continued. Although there was a variety of gifts in the Early Church, the New Testament reports a setting apart to special ministry, distinctions of service were made.³ This special ministry was essential then — it is essential in all times and circumstances. Such a ministry is exercised by persons who are called within the community and given gifts and authority to transmit the living testimony of the apostles.

14. Christ, through the Holy Spirit, stirs up, strengthens and sends those whom he has called for this special ministry, making them ambassadors of his message and work. Persons called to this ministry are commissioned to serve the work of the Lord by following him, being conformed to him and by announcing his name. The presence of this ministry in the community signifies the priority of divine initiative and authority in the Church's existence. Thus, whatever the diversity of functions in a Christian community may be, the specific service of the ordained minister is to assemble the community and to serve it by pointing to its fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ — Christ who is the source of its mission and the foundation of its unity.

15. *The essential and specific function of the special ministry is : to assemble and build up the Christian community, by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, and presiding over the liturgical and sacramental life of the eucharistic community.* The Christian community and the special ministry are related to one another. The minister cannot exist and fulfil his task in isolation. He needs the support and encouragement of the community. On the other hand, the Christian community needs the special ministry which serves to coordinate and unite the different gifts in the community and to strengthen and enable the ministry of the whole People of God. But above all, this relationship and mutual dependence manifests that the Church is not master of the Word and Sacrament, nor the source of its faith, hope and unity. Christian life as well as the ministry are received from the living Christ in the Church.

16. The setting apart by God for this special ministry requires from the side of the Church a recognition of which a form is already found in Apostolic times (for example, II Timothy 1 : 6 f.) and which later became commonly known as ordination.

³ *Louvain* 1971, p. 81.

F. THE DIVERSITY OF MINISTRY

23. So far the discussion has concerned the one ordained ministry, which can be discerned in various churches in various forms and structures. The form which ordained ministry takes in any church tradition is due to the interaction of three elements: (1) the givenness of the commission of Jesus and the reception of the Spirit; (2) the changing patterns of society; (3) the Church's response in the Spirit to those changing patterns in the social environment.

24. When the diversity of ordained ministry among the various churches is examined, it is evident that this diversity is bound up with the history and cultural particularity of those churches. Each case reveals what might be called a particular "theological-ecclesial culture", that is, a coherence of theology, piety, liturgical tradition, community life, geographical origin, law and jurisprudence. So the diversity of ministerial structures is part of a more complex ecclesial diversity of styles and types, reflecting weighty differences of a theological, sociological and psychological nature. But the limits of ministerial diversity are determined by the apostolic commission, the action of the Holy Spirit and the fact that major patterns of leadership in society are not infinitely variable.

25. The plurality of ecclesial cultures and ministerial structures does not diminish the one ministerial reality found in Christ and constituted by the Holy Spirit in the commission of the Apostles. Among the various ministerial structures the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter-priest and deacon predominates. But it would be wrong to exclude other patterns of ministry which are found among the churches. Within the same community of faith it is possible to have, side by side, various styles of ecclesial life and ministerial structures, without making the one the model for all the others.

26. There is unity in the diversity of ministerial structures, in that the essential elements of ministry can always be identified in the very plurality and multiformity of essential styles and structures. It would be difficult to imagine any structure of ministry which did not incorporate *episcopate*, as that oversight of the Church and of the celebration of the Christian mystery which belongs to the Gospel, and *presbyteral* function understood as the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments. Both the episcopal and presbyteral functions of the Church must be understood as a sharing in the *diakonia*, that is, as costly service to the community of the Church and to the world through the proclamation and actualization of the Gospel. In the course of history, the function of *diakonia* has found expression in the office of deacon and the deaconess. For about 20 years now, many churches, independently from one another, have been giving attention to the possible renewal of this office.

III. Ordination

A. THE MEANING OF ORDINATION

38. The Church, in ordaining some of its members to the ministry in the name of Christ, attempts to follow the mission of the Apostles and to remain faithful to their teaching. Ordination as an act attests the bond of the Church with Jesus Christ and the apostolic witness, recalling that it is the risen Lord who is the true ordainer, who bestows the gift. In ordaining, the Church provides, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, for the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and humble service in Christ's name. The laying-on of hands can be seen as the sign of the gift of the Spirit, rendering visible the ordering of this ministry in the revelation accomplished in him, and reminding the Church to look to him as the source of its commission.⁴

39. Properly speaking, then, ordination denotes an action by God and by the community which inaugurates a relationship in which the ordained is strengthened by the Spirit for his or her task and is upheld by the acknowledgment and prayers of the congregation.

40. This basic understanding has been elaborated both theologically and liturgically in many different ways. It becomes increasingly important in ecumenical discussion to seek to understand how this process of elaboration occurs and to take full account of its consequences. Beyond their etymologies and dictionary definitions, words become the carriers of implicit metaphors, the vehicle of unconscious assumptions about human relationships and the functioning of social institutions derived from the cultures of different times and places. The taken-for-granted background of a given term often has its hidden influence on the way that term is combined with others to form more complex structures of thought. The same is true of the combination of symbolic acts to form liturgies.

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43. The original New Testament terms for ordination tend to be simple and descriptive. The fact of appointment is recorded. The laying-on of hands is described. There seems to be no warrant for building any particular theory — whether “catholic” or “protestant” — on the New Testament evidence alone. Thus when the theory and practice of ordination are worked out, as they must be, to meet new conditions and opportunities, care must be taken to be aware of the intellectual process involved. Ecumenical dialogue may well include a mutual effort to uncover the implicit, the unconscious, the unspoken dimensions of what we think and do. Such effort could both break down barriers and enhance our appreciation of the symbolic and experiential riches we have in common.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

B. THE ACT OF ORDINATION

44. The act of ordination is at one and the same time : invocation of the Holy Spirit (*epiklesis*) ; sacramental sign ; acknowledgment of gifts and commitment. It is :

45. (a) An invocation to God that he bestow the power of the Holy Spirit upon the new minister in his new relation to the local Christian community, to the Church universal and to the world. The otherness of God's initiative, of which the ordained ministry is a symbol, is here acknowledged in the act of ordination itself. "The Spirit blows where it wills" (John 3 : 3), and invocation of the Spirit implies an absolute dependence on God for the outcome of the Church's prayer. This means that the Spirit may set new forces in motion and open new possibilities "far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3 : 20).

46. (b) A sign of the granting of this prayer by the Lord who gives the gift of ministry. Although the outcome of the Church's *epiklesis* depends on the freedom of God, the Church ordains in confidence that God, being faithful to his promise in Christ, enters sacramentally into contingent, historical forms of human relationship and uses them for his purpose. Ordination is a sign performed in faith that the spiritual relationship signified is present in, with and through the words spoken, the gestures made and the ecclesiastical forms employed.

47. (c) An acknowledgment by the Church of its discernment of gifts of the Spirit in the one ordained, and a commitment by both Church and ordinand, to the tests and opportunities implied in the new relationship. By receiving the new minister in the act of ordination, the congregation acknowledges this minister's gifts and commits itself to responsibility for an openness toward him. Likewise the one ordained offers his gifts to the Church and commits himself to the burden and opportunity of new authority and responsibility.

48. In order to experience and demonstrate the truth that setting apart is not to some superior level of discipleship, but rather to service within the Church, it is important that the entire process of ordination involve the whole body of the people. There needs to be continual emphasis on the fact that ordination is not only "over against" nor *vis-à-vis* the congregation, but rather, that a person is addressed in the midst of the people. It is also important that the congregation have a part in the calling, choosing and training of an ordinand, preserving the basic significance of the call to the ministry. This means more than the inclusion of a sentence or two in the liturgy and ordaining in the presence of the laity, important as that may be.⁵

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

49. A long and early Christian tradition places ordination in the context of worship and especially of the eucharist. Such a place for the service of ordination preserves the understanding of ordination as an *act* of the *whole* community, and not of a certain order within it or of the individual ordained. Even if one believes that the act of ordaining belongs to a special order within the Church, it is always important to remember that the entire community is involved in the act. Ordination, in association with the eucharist, keeps before the Church the truth that it is an act which initiates a person to a *service of the "koinonia"* (the fellowship), a service both to God and to the fellow man. It is this *koinonia* that the eucharist expresses *par excellence* and by continuing to relate ordination to the eucharist this dimension of ministry is called to mind. Ordination within the service of the eucharist also reminds the Church that the ordained ministry is set apart to point to Christ's own ministry and not to some other. By placing ordination in the context of worship and especially the eucharist, this act is referred to God himself and the ordained person is dedicated to the service of "his Servant" who offers himself for the salvation of the world.⁶

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IV. The Ministry in Practice Today

A. CHANGE AND RENEWAL IN CHURCH AND MINISTRY

70. The Church is the people of God in history. It is part of the world to which it is sent. As human society changes, the Church is called to seek a new obedience to God in the new situation. For instance, if in society new means of communication are developed, they will have their effect upon the ministry of the Word. For example, if in a society there is a great movement of population from countryside to city, a church whose structures are wholly adapted to a rural situation is challenged to change them. Such manifestation is required in order that the Church may do in the world what it exists to do : which is, by the power of Christ, to proclaim and show in its own life the breaking in of the Kingdom.

71. In our time the world in which the Church of God finds itself is undergoing bewilderingly rapid change. The Church must therefore renew its efforts to adapt its mission and life. Its capacity for change is a measure of the vitality of the Church and its ministry. The response of a church to the changing situations in the world must combine the resources which God has imparted to his pilgrim people in the past with the insight that they receive from the world in which God has placed them.⁸

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

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C. NEW MINISTRIES AND OLD MINISTRIES

79. The experience of God's pilgrim people in both the remote and the recent past makes it clear that new forms of ministry may turn out to have as much to recommend them as the forms that a church in a given time or place may have inherited. At the same time, patterns of the ministry with a long history in the Church frequently have proved to be eminently adaptable to new situations. A church in a given time and place ought not, therefore, lightly to abandon an inherited pattern or replace it with a different arrangement merely because the inherited pattern is old and the different arrangement is new. For that reason, a church today may indeed find it possible and even highly desirable to retain or take over a venerable and traditional pattern of the ordained ministry — for example, the inherited parish ministry — as long as this pattern shows itself capable of accommodation to the needs of a new situation that a given church confronts. At the same time, a church should not be faulted if it supplements an inherited pattern with new forms, or if it reacts to the problems raised by a new social situation by devising new and experimental ministries. For example, ministries to members of specific professions and occupational groupings have filled vital needs in many places. At any rate, in the allowing of new forms of ministry, the churches have paradigms in the multiformity of the ministry in the apostolic and sub-apostolic Church as the New Testament reflects it, as well as in subsequent periods and in other places in the Church's long history.

80. The need for a sharpened sense of ecumenical responsibility at this point cannot be overstressed. The inter-relatedness of the churches that has made the modern ecumenical movement both possible and necessary should have made us all aware that no church can wholly escape the impact of another church's action. It may not always be possible to implement changes in the structures of ministry through an ecumenical forum — desirable as this may be. Indeed, certain problems, even certain almost universal problems, may be amenable to solution only at a denominational or even local level. But in the process of making changes each church should seek to be as sensitive as possible to the potential ecumenical implications of its solutions to its problems, especially in so sensitive an area as the ministry.

81. Furthermore, it is important that the devising and assessing of new and experimental forms of ministry should not be in the hands of ordained ministers alone, but that at every stage the opinion and experience of lay people should be listened to, and allowed to count in decision-making.

82. Many situations now require a team ministry made up of ordained ministers from different churches. For example, a University Chaplaincy Counselling or Hospital Chaplaincy, or a team ministry to a church may naturally be serviced in this way.

83. (i) Experience shows that such an enterprise brings into the open some of the deep contrasts between the different ecclesial traditions of ministry : in "image" or "personal" formation. Two churches may have clear theological agreement about the eucharist but the minister of the one may be shaped by a tradition of daily liturgy and communion in the church which the minister of the other would find strange. In a team ministry contrasts of this kind have to be faced, contained and worked through, as more generally in the development of closer ecumenical cooperation between churches.

84. (ii) In any case the combined ministry of an ecumenical team (say, on a university campus) cannot but be a powerful instrument for the education of the laity of the Church. A Christian brought up within one ecclesial tradition is confronted by a wide range of style in both worship and ministry and by the emergence of new styles. Such an experience is bound to create the possibility of new insights into the meaning of the Gospel, and new involvement in the life of the Church.

85. (iii) The development of ecumenical team ministries has already led to the corresponding development of ecumenical training for ordination in interdenominational theological schools. For the ordained staff of such schools and for their students similar tensions and educational opportunities arise.

86. For all these reasons ecumenical cooperation between ministers is bound to confront the participating churches with urgent demands that further progress be made towards mutual recognition of different Church ministries.

87. All these considerations point to the fact that the mutual recognition of ministries represents much more than doctrinal agreement about them. It involves a readiness throughout the churches to face tensions and conflicts about the minister's role creatively, in a lively dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

FROM:

*Towards an Ecumenical Consensus on Baptism,
Eucharist, Ministry; A Response to the Churches,*
Faith and Order Paper No. 84, Geneva, 1977

(Available from Faith and Order, World Council of Churches,
Geneva, Switzerland)

M I N I S T R Y

In their discussion of the ministry, the replies of the churches provide encouraging signs of increasing agreement and even of further progress toward an emerging consensus. It is on the basis of existing agreement that churches can seek to resolve their remaining disagreements.

1. Among those matters on which a common mind seems to have been reached are the following:
 - a) The existence of an ordained ministry as normal in the church and its recognizable continuity are presupposed in the vast majority of churches.
 - b) There is positive response to the christological foundation of the ministry found in the agreed statement. It is also agreed that, because the ministry is modelled on that of Christ, it is to be seen as a ministry of service.
 - c) It is widely accepted that it is only with the living and serving community as a whole that the nature and function of the ministry can be understood.
2. On some matters, there is increasing agreement:
 - a) Most replies affirm that it is the whole Church which is apostolic and that this apostolicity is manifested in various ways beside ministerial succession.
 - b) The reactions to the description of ordination and of Christ's call through the Holy Spirit to the ordained ministry suggest that this section of the agreed statement is sufficiently acceptable to serve as a basis for future work.
3. On other matters, though some convergence is apparent, further reflection and work are needed and further guidance must be sought from the churches:
 - a) One implication of the existence of a special ministry is that some form of *episcope* (overseeing) is recognizably present in all churches; what is the relationship between this *episcope* and the historical and personal forms through which it has been manifest in the churches?

- b) To many replies it is not completely clear how the diversity of ministry is understood in the agreed statement on ministry (paras. 23-26): especially the relation between the plurality of ministerial structures and the predominance of the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon seems to be in need of clarification.
- c) The use of the term "sign" in the agreed statement, both in relation to episcopal succession and in relation to the act of ordination, needs some clarification in view of the objections raised in several replies. Perhaps it is helpful for further discussion on this point to remember that the term "sign" is used in two different ways. The interpretation of episcopal succession as "an effective sign" means that for some churches episcopacy serves and manifests the continuity of the apostolic faith and communion. The use of the term "sacramental sign" for ordination means that God, answering the prayer which is combined with the sign of the laying-on of hands, enters into and uses a historical form of human relationship for his purpose. If the term "sign" is used as expressing a historical manifestation of God's faithfulness to the word of his promise, this might lead to a deeper agreement.
- d) Since there is increasing agreement that it is the whole Church which is apostolic, the ways of discussing ministerial succession are broadening. The various existing conceptions of ministerial succession within the whole community of the faithful should be carefully compared in order to increase mutual enrichment and stimulate the development of a common mind. Inasmuch as ministerial succession is but one of several permanent characteristics of the apostolicity of the Church, how can it be related to these (for example, sacramental life, witness to the apostolic faith, preaching the Gospel, service of the needy)?
- e) A certain distinction between general and special (ordained) ministry is recognized and accepted in practically all replies (see above 1a). There are, however, many diverging views on the question as to whether it is a distinction in function, degree or kind.
- f) Churches moving toward conciliar fellowship will want increasingly to see the ministry serving the communion of the whole Church. In what way can this desire be met? What role can a personal ministry, or personal

ministries, play in serving the unity and universality of the Church as a whole? (In taking up this question, use should be made of the reports of those bilateral conversations which have already considered this.)

- g) The replies of the churches and the wider ecumenical discussion indicate widespread recognition of the need for further biblical and theological study of women and ministry. This will include asking such questions as: what insights can be gained from those churches which for a long time already have ordained women in ministry, and: is it possible to have a mutually recognized ministry where there is diversity of practice on this issue?
4. Several replies point, implicitly or explicitly, to the importance of the context in the discussion on ministry:
- a) Work towards a consensus on ministry must take account of the situations of the churches. Churches are challenged to look at their own practice of ministry. The conditioning of its life situation may mean that a church is simply not open to any universal consensus: it lives to itself and is not interested in ecumenical experience. In another church, ministerial problems arising from its situation (for example, the effect of racism, tribalism, its economic position) may be wholly untouched by any consensus statement whose very universal and general nature may appear to have little to say to its specific church-dividing problems. Elsewhere, ties of world confessional loyalty may prevent a church from being open to the possibility of consensus at a regional or national level.
 - b) In many practical ways, the ministers of various churches cooperate with each other in a way that amounts to a *de facto* recognition of each other's ministries. For example, in some places there are joint chaplaincies (university, military, prison), or joint placements in parishes or experimental ministries; in other circumstances pastors and priests prepare together their preaching of the Word. Might not theological reflection on the implications of these situations lead toward a wider mutual recognition? Generally speaking, when the traditional concerns in the ecumenical reflection on ministry are linked to analyses of the concrete context in which it functions, might that not be constructive in the further development of consensus?

- c) If serious attention is given to the context, different ways toward recognition, moving at varying speeds, are to be expected. For example, there may be some limited possibilities of mutual fellowship and study open to ministers of a small Protestant Church with priests of a Roman Catholic majority. These will be quite different in nature from actions which are possible, for instance, in multilateral conversations, which move by way of a covenant and lead to interchangeability of ministers (for example, as envisaged in the Ten Propositions of the Churches' Unity Commission in England).

FROM:

Daniel F. Martensen, "A Call to Consensus",
LWF Report, No. 8, April 1980

(Available from the LWF Department of Communication)

MINISTRY

The Accra document on the ministry distinguishes between the general ministry of the community of believers, on the one hand, and the ordained or special ministry, on the other. Both categories are informed in the discussion by references to Christ and to the socio-political contexts within which ministry is carried out. This distinction quite naturally becomes a focal point for a number of comments.

While it affirms the idea that the two kinds of ministry must be seen to be supplementary, the CHURCH OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION OF ALSACE AND LORRAINE is one that calls for a more complete consideration of this matter. For this church, a hierarchical relationship between the two is found to be an unacceptable way of interpreting the ministry in and of the church.

"Of outstanding importance is the idea that ministry belongs to the people of God", says the LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA. It notes that baptism as ordination for every believer is a phrase that may become increasingly prominent within its constituency in the coming decades: "If 'ministry' means witness to the gospel in daily life and service to our fellow humans, then ministry is incumbent on all the baptized. But if the term denotes the ordained ministry, then Lutherans do distinguish a special function within the whole people of God. The Augsburg Confession does charge the ordained ministry with special responsibility to set forth the message of justification by grace through faith."

In the response of the CHURCH OF SWEDEN, one finds a plea for clearer emphasis on the separate source of the authority of the ministry over against the community. The EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MECKLENBURG regrets that the world-relatedness of the ministry remains as underdeveloped as it is. It is the view of the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SAXONY that, as the argument in the ministry statement unfolds, it seems to entrust the leadership of the congregation to the special ministry, which seems to contradict the emphasis made upon the ministry of the whole congregation.

Among the churches which lay particular stress upon the distinct nature and source of authority for the ordained ministry is the UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN

CHURCH OF GERMANY (FRG). It asserts that more clarity is needed in discussing the relationship of ministry to Christ's mission: There is a "qualitative difference between Christ and those who serve him.... The special ministry has its unity in the action of Jesus Christ aimed at establishing and maintaining the church."

The EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN BERLIN-BRANDENBURG (GDR) believes that responsible leadership and judgment in the church can be distorted into claims of dominion "if the minister does not remain bound to the faithful". If this interdependence and reciprocity is lacking, the authority will not "find genuine acknowledgment in the community". The CHURCH OF NORWAY draws a clear line of connection between the authority of ministry and the authority of Scripture. The EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND says that its ministry is subordinate to word and sacraments: "Consequently our church rejects, on the one hand, an interpretation of ministry which places it above word and sacraments, and, on the other, a concept of ministry in which the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments is made dependent on random and arbitrary wishes and opinions of individual Christians or of the whole congregation."

According to the LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA, it is in the official or public character of the ordained ministry that its distinctiveness lies: "The ordained ministry is therefore created by this intersection of the 'official' and the 'representative' functions of the ministry of word and sacraments. The 'official' dimension calls attention to the *ordering* of this ministry, and the 'representative' dimension reflects its *function*."

Both dimensions, it says, are important in order that a distinction can be made between the ordained ministry and other ministries carried out by individual Christians.

Multiple opinions are expressed on the question how the special or ordained ministry of the church is to be characterized. The UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GERMANY (FRG) argues that the churches of the Reformation simply reject the idea that the special ministry of the church is a prolongation of the priesthood of the Old Testament. The basis for this is simply that in Christ there is

the true high priest. Because salvation has been effected once and for all, the argument goes, there is no need for any human mediation of salvation in the sense of the priesthood of the Old Testament. The language of the New Testament backs up the assumption. Early Christianity, it is noted, did not use the word "priest" when it spoke of office holders in the congregation. Thus it is "questionable whether it really represents a contribution to 'reconciliation in ministries' when, on the basis of this New Testament linguistic usage, paragraphs 20-22, (pp. 34-35) attempt to provide a link to those churches in whose tradition the special ministry is understood as a priestly service".

Whether or not the special ministry of the church may or may not be termed priestly is, of course, not settled by clarifying the interrelationships between New Testament and Old Testament categories of thought.

In deliberations about the label "priest", or the differences between "general" and specific ministry, the EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN BERLIN-BRANDENBURG (GDR) urges that one not lose sight of the basic purpose of all ministry, nor the task of the general and specific ministry: to bear credible witness to Christ before the world.

The broad topic of language usage, particularly the use of sociological terminology in the Accra statement on ministry, is raised by the EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BAVARIA. It questions "whether the sociological terminology ('theological-ecclesial culture', 'ministerial structures', 'types', 'patterns of leadership', etc.) is in such widespread use, so familiar, and sufficiently clear to be adopted without hesitation in a theological statement".

Regret is expressed by the CHURCH OF NORWAY that "the question of the differentiation of services is not dealt with in the statement. A good deal of work is being done on this problem, both in our church and in others. And precisely because this statement could provide a norm for many churches, and because part of the theology of the ministry is closely connected with the problem of the differentiation of services, it is a pity that this subject is not treated."

The CHURCH OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION OF ALSACE AND LORRAINE asserts that the complementarity, rather than the hierarchical relationships, of the ministries of the

church needs to be expressed. This church feels it would be better to speak of service to Christ, rather than the ministry of particular individuals.

On the tension between the unity and diversity of ministry, the UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GERMANY (FRG) makes a number of observations. It is its understanding that Christ himself "commissions human beings in a public fashion to bring into effect his saving gifts of word and sacrament, so that a community comes into existence in which the salvation created by Christ becomes a reality that is decisive for life. This unity of the special ministry persists even when, in response to concrete historical requirements, it ramifies into externally diverse functions and services. It is, therefore, an as yet unsolved question how the fundamental unity of the ministry is to be understood in churches with hierarchical structures, to which belongs 'the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter-priest, and deacon' (para. 25, pp. 35-36)."

Turning now to the question of apostolicity and succession in the special ministry, we see that both the CHURCH OF SWEDEN and the AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH are adamant that succession is not the critical factor for apostolicity. They assert that the lack of episcopal succession can never lead to a doubting of the apostolicity of the church involved. As in previous argumentation, the UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GERMANY (FRG) turns to biblical foundations for its insight on the issue of succession and apostolicity. It points out that apostolicity was the touchstone for determining the legitimacy of preaching in the New Testament period. In the second and third centuries, it becomes tied to theories of church authority. It is asserted that, if we are to make much progress on this question today, our language must square with New Testament facts: "In the New Testament sense, 'apostolic' means the link with the foundation laid by the apostles, i.e., the authoritative witnesses of the gospel in the first generation. The apostolicity of the ministry consists neither in a direct continuation of the ministry of the apostles, nor in proof of a succession of ministries proceeding from the apostles.... The ministry is apostolic because, and to the extent that, it has the mission of building up the church on the foundation laid by the apostles and the prophets (Eph. 2:20)."

The language about the orderly transmission of ministry and other comparable

phrases in paragraph 29 (p. 36) is seen by the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (FRG) to be ambiguous. At many instances in church history, it points out, ministry in terms of succession was quite legitimate, but had become untrue to the gospel and therefore unapostolic in light of its mission. The EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FRANCE expresses its suspicion of terms like the "fullness of the *sign* of apostolic succession" (para. 104, p. 56). The EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN BERLIN-BRANDENBURG (GDR) is among those who see the accent upon episcopacy in the Accra statement on ministry to be unacceptable to many of its ministers.

The LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA continues to define its ministry in a functional way. It remains an office in the church. They feel no need to recover what is referred to as the "fullness of the *sign* of apostolic succession", even though it has no trouble in "recognizing the ministry of other churches as valid" or "acknowledging the sign of episcopal succession as of value to churches with such a ministry.... Some Lutheran churches claim a ministry ordained by bishops in apostolic succession, but care has been taken by Lutheran churches to avoid making distinctions among themselves on this basis. Lutherans, particularly in ecumenical discussion, have stressed 'the primary manifestation of apostolic succession' as occurring 'in the life of the church as a whole' and as a succession in the apostolic gospel and faith."

The EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BAVARIA says that it cannot accept the idea that, beyond the marks of the preaching of the gospel in its purity and the right administration of the sacraments, any fuller sign of apostolic succession is needed. For the sake of the love of its sister churches, however, it might consider accepting the sign of the laying on of hands. In this it sees no detriment to its confession.

According to the CHURCH OF SWEDEN it is of great importance for all churches to ask themselves "whether their structures of ministry (episcopal, presbyterial, and diaconal) are adequate expressions of historical continuity".

Moving to the question of ordination, we see that the AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH (like the Lutheran Church in America) sees the ministry as an office and a function. "Lutherans", the ALC response says "are concerned that ordination not be

understood as a setting apart to a superior level of discipleship, but to an office within the church."

The UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN GERMANY (FRG) sees ordination as both gift and commission. The gift is a gift of the Spirit in which Christ gives a binding promise that he will make use of the talents of the individual for the care of a congregation. A certain authority comes along with this promise. "It is a commission because the individual is taken into service for the tasks of a special ministry." The EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BAVARIA regrets that no more is said in the Accra documents about the question of the valid ordainer. The issue of how ministry is transmitted by ministers is, they feel, of great importance. Not to mention that ordination is carried out by ordained ministers is regarded as a serious omission.

Lutheran responses to the issue of women's ordination are affirmative, but cautious. All appear to be prepared to dedicate time and energy to further clarification of this issue. The CHURCH OF SWEDEN says: "It is probably correct that within Christianity one increasingly finds that 'doctrinal considerations either favour the ordination of women or are neutral' (para. 69, p. 49)". The Swedish church looks forward to the time when the whole matter can be taken up in the context of an ecumenical council. It notes that various opinions exist on this matter, even in churches (e.g., the Swedish) where there have been decades of preparation for, and an ongoing practice of, ordaining women. Relations to other churches, it is said, have not been rendered more difficult because of that practice. The LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA reports that it has been ordaining women since 1970 (following an action of that year's convention).

The EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BAVARIA feels that, "in all fairness, the argumentation against the ordination of women [para. 65, pp. 45-48] should mention the problem of scriptural proof as well as that of tradition. It is of little relevance to bring themes from the sexism debate, which, after all, has as yet barely come to any useful conclusion, into a document on so sensitive an issue as the ministry. Arguments from the sphere of social development, and emancipatory considerations, do *not* have a place in genuinely theological discussions on the ordination of women.... It is unfortunate that the ordination of women is the only question that the agreed statements refer to a future ecumenical council. Despite its undoubted importance, this considerably overrates the issue."

FROM:

*Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV:
Eucharist and Ministry*, ed. by Paul C.
Empie and T. Austin Murphy, Washington/
New York, 1970

(Available from U.S.A. National Committee of the Lutheran
World Federation, 360 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y.10010)

EUCHARIST AND MINISTRY: A LUTHERAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC STATEMENT

CHAPTER ONE

Common Observations on Eucharistic Ministry

INTRODUCTION

1. The problem of the Ministry¹ is an inevitable item on any agenda of doctrinal discussion between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. In each of our other discussions, we have found ourselves confronted by it.

2. In our treatment of the Nicene creed and the significance of dogmatic statements we saw the necessary connection between dogma (i. e., authoritative creeds and confessions) and the teaching authority of the church.² Our dialogue on baptism made it possible for us to confess together our faith that this sacrament is an act of Christ by which God calls his church into being. At the same time we recognized that differences of interpretation of this sacramental act have frequently been rooted in differing understandings of the Ministry of the church.³

¹ For the distinction between *Ministry* and *ministry*, see paragraph 9 below.

² *The Status of the Nicene Creed as Dogma of the Church*. Published Jointly by Representatives of the U. S. A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs. 1965.

³ *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue II: One Baptism for the Remission of Sins*. Edited by Paul C. Empie and William W. Baum. Published jointly by Representatives of the U. S. A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs. 1966.

3. Sessions devoted to the problems of the eucharist as sacrifice and of the presence of Christ in the sacrament showed again a remarkable agreement in these much controverted topics, but also showed us how many matters could be cleared up only by discussion of the question of the Minister of the eucharist.⁴ This became even more clear when we devoted one meeting to the problems of receiving communion in each other's eucharistic celebrations. There we recognized that a solution was not possible until the problems of the Ministry were squarely faced.

4. In our sessions dealing with the Ministry, as in our other discussions, we have attempted to clear away misunderstandings, to clarify to each other the theological concerns of our traditions, and to see what common affirmations we can make about the reality of the Ministry. Neither Catholic nor Lutheran participants came to this dialogue with a complete doctrine of this Ministry and we have not formulated one in our discussions. We have found certain areas that we judge are central to this reality and critical for the unity of the church. In these areas we make common affirmations. We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the ongoing discussion of the Ministry in the ecumenical movement, both for its clarification of the theological issues and for its service in prodding us to do our thinking about the Ministry in a responsibly ecumenical context.⁵

5. Again we have noted that in our use of the same terms, we have not always meant the same things, and that differing theological language has sometimes masked theological concerns which are similar if not identical. We are convinced that in spite of differing vocabularies and problematics we are both approaching greater agreement on what God is doing in his church, as is evidenced in the following paragraphs.

I. THE MINISTRY IN THE CONTEXT OF GOD'S ACT IN CHRIST

6. Both the Catholic and the Lutheran traditions confess that God fulfills his promise to his people and definitively reveals his saving love

⁴ *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue III: The Eucharist as Sacrifice*. Published jointly by Representatives of the U. S. A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. 1967.

⁵ *Faith and Order Findings*, Montreal, 1963 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963).

for the world in the life, death, resurrection, and coming again of Jesus Christ. The God of Israel acts and speaks in the deeds and words of his Son.

7. Scripture attests that it was through the work of the Holy Spirit that Jews and Gentiles alike repented, believed, and were baptized. Thus were men united by Christ into the unique community called the church.

8. The Lord of the church, through the Holy Spirit, continues to act sacramentally and to proclaim his teaching through the men whom he has united with himself. The words and acts of Jesus in which the God of Israel has revealed his love for all mankind are the "good news." Under the guidance of the Spirit the first believers proclaimed by deed and word this gospel of the saving presence, activity, and teaching of the Lord.

9. The church has, then, the task of proclaiming the gospel to all, believers and unbelievers. This task or service of the whole church is spoken of as "ministry" (*diakonia*). In the course of this statement, we employ the term ministry (lower case *m*, with or without the definite article) in this sense. The ministry of the church, thus defined, will be distinguished from the (or a) Ministry, a particular form of service — a specific order, function or gift (charism) within and for the sake of Christ's church in its mission to the world. The term Minister in this document refers to the person to whom this Ministry has been entrusted. We are convinced that the special Ministry must not be discussed in isolation but in the context of the ministry of the whole people of God.

II. THE MINISTRY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHURCH

A. The Ministry of the People of God

10. The ministry which devolves upon the whole church can rightly be described as a priestly service (*hierateuma*, cf. 1 Peter 2: 5, 9), such as that of ancient Israel, whom Yahweh fashioned into "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" among all peoples (Exodus 19:5-6). We are agreed that in Jesus Christ God has provided his people with a high priest and sacrifice (cf. Hebrews 4:14ff.). All who are united with Jesus as Christ and Lord by baptism and faith are also united with, and share, his priesthood. We recognize therefore that the whole church has a priesthood in Christ, i. e., a ministry or service from God to men, that "they may see your good deeds and glorify

God on the day of visitation" (I Peter 2:12). They are thus privileged and obliged to represent the concerns of God to men and those of men to God.

11. To enable the church to be what God intends it to be in and for the world, God bestows within this priesthood various gifts for ministering. In particular, "God has appointed . . . apostles, prophets, teachers," etc. (I Corinthians 12:28-30; cf. Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:7-12). While no single Ministry mentioned in the New Testament corresponds exactly to the special Ministry of the later church,⁶ many of the specialized tasks of which we hear in the New Testament are entrusted to that later Ministry: preaching the gospel, administering what the church came to call sacraments, caring for the faithful. We turn now to what we can say in common of this special Ministry in the church (keeping in mind the particular aspect of our study — valid Ministry in relation to the eucharist).

B. The Special Ministry

12. Just as the church is to be seen in the light of God's love, his act in Christ, and the work of the Spirit, so also the Ministry is to be

⁶ Development of the Ministry of the Christian church is difficult to trace and much controverted. Cf. Jerome D. Quinn, "Ministry in the New Testament," pp. 69-100. The passages cited in the text above list the following varieties of ministering:

1 Corinthians 12: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle-workers, healers, administrators, those who speak in tongues;

Romans 12: prophecy, serving (*diakonia*), teaching, exhorting, liberality in giving, zeal in aid, acts of mercy;

Ephesians 4: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers.

Everyone would agree that some of these categories belong in the special Ministry of the church (e. g., apostles, prophets, teachers), and that others reflect the ministry of the people of God (acts of mercy, aid and helping), and that some are hard to categorize (healing, teaching). Of particular interest, in any sketch of the development, would be the Ministry of "the Twelve," the Ministry of the apostles in a broader sense, the Ministry of the presbyter-bishop, the Ministry of those who baptized, and the Ministry of those who presided at the eucharist. Information, however, is incomplete. Neither the Twelve nor the apostles in the Pauline writings seem to have limited their Ministry to a local church as the later presbyter-bishop normally did, nor do we have much evidence of their administering sacraments. In fact, we are told very little in the New Testament about those who did preside at the eucharist. Thus the Ministry in the later church involving evangelism, preaching, sacraments, pastoral care, and administration in a community, combines functions that were not always united in the early church.

seen in light of the love of God, his saving act in Jesus Christ, and the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit. This Ministry has the twofold task of proclaiming the gospel to the world — evangelizing, witnessing, serving — and of building up in Christ those who already believe — teaching, exhorting, reproof, and sanctifying, by word and sacrament. For this twofold work, the Spirit endows the Ministry with varieties of gifts, and thus helps the church to meet new situations in its pilgrimage. Through proclamation of the word and administration of the sacraments, this Ministry serves to unify and order the church in a special way for its ministry.⁷

13. The Ministry stands with the people of God under Christ but also speaks in the name of Christ to his people. On the one hand, the Ministry as part of the church's ministry stands under the Word and the Spirit, under judgment as well as under grace. But it also has a special role within the ministry of the people of God, proclaiming God's Word, administering the sacraments, exhorting and reproof.⁸

14. This Ministry is "apostolic." The term "apostolic" has had a variety of references: it has been applied for instance to doctrine, practices, authority.⁹ Indeed, the variety of ways in which the gospel is expressed in the early church may be recognized as a feature of apostolicity.¹⁰

⁷ Cf. the paper given at the Catholic-Lutheran conversations in Nemi, Italy, May, 1969, by George A. Lindbeck, "The Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry: Catholic and Reformed," in *Theological Studies* 30 (1969), 588-612; also the Common Statement of the Nemi meeting.

⁸ Warren A. Quanbeck, "A Contemporary View of Apostolic Succession," pp. 185-187.

⁹ James F. McCue, "Apostles and Apostolic Succession in the Patristic Era," pp. 138-171; and Walter J. Burghardt, "Apostolic Succession: Notes on the Early Patristic Era," pp. 173-177.

¹⁰ The variety of ways in which the term "apostolic" is applied is not startling when we note that the New Testament authors employ the term "apostle" to designate persons with a variety of roles in the earliest Christian generations (cf. R. Schnackenburg, "*L'apostolicité: état de la recherche*," in *Istina* 14 (1969), 5-32, a paper originally prepared for the Vatican — World Council of Churches discussions on "Apostolicity and Catholicity."

The Second Vatican Council Decree on Ecumenism twice adverts to the fact that variety is itself an element in apostolicity. "While preserving unity in essentials, let all members of the Church, according to the office entrusted to each, preserve a proper freedom in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline, in the variety of liturgical rites, and even in the theological elaboration of revealed truth. In all things let charity be exercised.

15. Apostolicity has usually implied some sort of succession in what is apostolic. For many Catholics the phrase "apostolic succession" has meant succession in the ministerial office as a sign of unbroken transmission from the apostles. The stress for Lutherans has been on succession in apostolic doctrine. Historical studies have shown that in the New Testament and patristic periods there was stress on doctrinal succession; there also arose an emphasis on succession in apostolic office as a very important way of ensuring doctrinal succession and thus providing a sign of unity and a defense against heresy.¹¹

16. Entry into the Ministry has been designated by both Catholics and Lutherans as "ordination." This term too has had a variety of meanings. Catholics have seen in ordination a sacramental act, involving a gift of the Holy Spirit, a charism for the service of the church and the world, the designation to a special service in the church, and the quality of permanence and unrepeatability. Lutherans, using a different (and more restricted) definition of sacrament, have generally been reluctant to use "sacrament" with reference to ordination, although the Apology of the Augsburg Confession is willing to do so (13, 9-13). Because of post-Reformation polemics, Lutherans became even more reluctant to use the term. Their consistent practice, however, shows a conviction concerning the sacramental reality of ordination to the Ministry. Lutherans too invoke the Holy Spirit for the gifts of the Ministry, see ordination as the setting apart for a specific service in the church and for the world, and regard the act as having a once-for-all significance.¹² Thus there is considerable convergence

If the faithful are true to this course of action, they will be giving ever richer expression to the authentic catholicity of the Church, and, at the same time, to her apostolicity" (4).

This principle finds its first and obvious application in relation to the churches of the East and the council fathers emphatically reaffirmed it when they said, "... this Sacred Synod declares that this entire heritage of (Eastern) spirituality and liturgy, of discipline and theology, in their various traditions, befalls to the full catholic and apostolic character of the Church" (17).

Our Lutheran-Catholic dialogue has been conscious of and attempted to implement this principle as we sorted out our answers to the question, "How is the Ministry apostolic?"

¹¹ Burghardt, *op. cit.*

¹² Cf. the Lutheran replies to Catholic questions, Baltimore sessions, given by George A. Lindbeck and Warren A. Quanbeck, pp. 53-60.

between the Catholic and the Lutheran understandings of ordination.

17. The expressions "character" and "indelible" have been used by Catholics with reference to ordination to describe the aspects of gift, charism, designation, and the qualities of permanence and un-repeatability.¹³ Lutherans have objected to these terms because of the metaphysical implications they understand to be involved in them. However, historical studies and the renewal of liturgical and sacramental theology have brought into our discussions an emphasis upon the functional aspect of character and upon the gift of the Spirit.¹⁴ These factors may help us to overcome traditional disagreements and open the way to a common approach to this complex of problems.

18. Having discussed the terms "apostolic," "ordination," and "character," we now affirm together that entry into this apostolic and God-given Ministry is by ordination. No man ordains himself or can claim this office as his right, but he is called by God and designated in and through the church. In reference to what has been called "character," we are agreed that ordination to the Ministry is for a lifetime of service and is not to be repeated.

C. The Structuring of the Special Ministry

19. Although we agree that Christ has given his church a special order of Ministry, we must also acknowledge the diverse ways in which this Ministry has been structured and implemented in the Catholic and Lutheran traditions.

20. In Catholicism, the Ministry of order has been apportioned among three Ministries or major orders: deacon, priest (*presbyter*), and bishop. All are conferred by a rite of ordination that includes the laying on of hands. The distribution of ministerial functions among these orders varies and has varied. In the present discipline, all three are appointed to baptize and proclaim the gospel; only priests and bishops celebrate the eucharist; only bishops ordain to major orders. Without prejudice to their belief that it is the bishop who possesses

¹³ Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 33rd ed. (Hereafter cited as DS) (Freiburg: Herder, 1965), 1609; cf. 1313.

¹⁴ Lindbeck, "The Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry: Catholic and Reformed," cited above, note 7; article "Ordo" by Piet Fransen, in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder), vol. 7 (1962), columns 1215, 1216; article "Orders and Ordination" by Piet Fransen, in *Sacramentum Mundi* (New York: Herder and Herder), vol. 4 (1969), pp. 305-327.

the fullness of the Ministry conferred by ordination,¹⁵ Catholics note that it is both historically and theologically significant that priests have ordained others as priests.¹⁶

21. The Lutheran tradition has one order of ordained Ministers, usually called pastors, which combines features of the episcopate and the presbyterate. This Ministry is also conferred by a rite of ordination that includes the laying on of hands. The pastor who has received this Ministry possesses the fullness of that which ordination confers and in general he corresponds in his functions with the bishop in the Catholic tradition.¹⁷ In the Lutheran churches represented in this dialogue, the ordination of pastors is reserved to the district or synodical president or a pastor designated by him. The ordination of pastors in these churches goes back historically to priests ordained in the Catholic tradition who, on becoming Lutherans and lacking Catholic bishops who would impose hands on successors, themselves imposed hands for the ordination of co-workers and successors in the Ministry. From the Lutheran standpoint, such an ordination in presbyteral succession

¹⁵ The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) of Vatican II states, "This sacred Synod teaches that by episcopal consecration is conferred the fullness of the sacrament of orders (*plenitudinem conferri sacramenti Ordinis*), that fullness which in the church's liturgical practice and in the language of the holy Fathers of the Church is undoubtedly called the high priesthood, the apex of the sacred ministry" (21). The council fathers were first asked whether they wished to say that episcopal consecration constituted the *summum gradum sacramenti Ordinis*. After agreeing upon this, the precise terminology for expressing it was debated. As the *Relatio* of 1964 puts it, "*Potius autem quam supremus gradus sacramenti Ordinis, Episcopatus dicendus est eius plenitudo seu totalitas, omnes partes includens . . . ; plenitudo sacerdotii cui presbyteri deinde participant . . . ; plenitudo sacramenti Ordinis, vel ipsum sacramentum Ordinis*" (Rather than the highest degree of the sacrament of orders, the episcopate should be called its fullness or totality, embracing all its parts . . . ; the fullness of priesthood in which priests then participate . . . ; the fullness of the sacrament of orders, or the sacrament of orders itself).

¹⁶ DS 1145-1146, 1290. Cf. Fransen, "Orders and Ordination," in *Sacramentum Mundi*, vol. 4, esp. p. 316; Kilian McDonnell, "Ways of Validating Ministry," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 7 (1970), 209-265; Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church," pp. 116-117.

¹⁷ In Lutheran churches, for pastoral and administrative reasons, one pastor is designated "pastor of pastors," president of district or synod, or bishop. See Piepkorn, *op. cit.* See also the "Reflections of the Lutheran Participants" below.

designates and qualifies the Lutheran pastor for all the functions that the Catholic priest (*presbyter*) exercises, including that of celebrating a eucharist which would be called (in Catholic terminology) valid. It is to be noted, however, that the Lutheran confessions indicate a preference for retaining the traditional episcopal order and discipline of the church, and express regret that no bishop was willing to ordain priests for evangelical congregations.¹⁸

22. These ways in which the Ministry has been structured and implemented in our two traditions appear to us to be consonant with apostolic teaching and practice. We are agreed that the basic reality of the apostolic Ministry can be preserved amid variations in structure and implementation, in rites of ordination and in theological explanation. As we learn more of the complex history of the Ministry, we begin to grasp the ways in which this gift of God to his church is able to assimilate valuable elements from different ages and cultures without losing its authentic apostolic character. In this context we find that the present moment speaks persuasively to us, urging both the renewal of what is basic in our apostolic heritage as well as openness to the variants that our Christian witness to the world requires. In presenting these common observations on the eucharistic Ministry we are aware of the difficulties implied therein for both of our traditions,¹⁹ as our respective reflections in the following two chapters indicate. That we have not found these difficulties insuperable is indicated by the recommendations which each group has been able to make. We rejoice together at the future prospect of Christian recognition and reconciliation opened by these recommendations.

¹⁸ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article 14. The critical edition of the Lutheran confessions is *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 6th ed., 1967). The standard English edition is *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959). Cf. below the Lutheran answer to the Catholic question at the Baltimore sessions, "How do Lutherans evaluate, theologically and practically, episcopally structured churches?" pp. 53-56. Cf. also no. 28 of the Lutheran "Reflections" below.

¹⁹ Other aspects of matters treated need further discussion and many other topics are not touched in these common observations. Among the latter might be mentioned the apostolic Ministry and succession of the bishop of Rome and its relationship to the apostleship of Peter and Paul; infallibility, especially as applied to papal infallibility; the distinction between matters that are of divine law and those which are of human law (*jure divino et humano*); the question of a purely charismatic ministry; questions of eucharistic sharing; the specific relations of a presbyterally ordained Ministry to an episcopally oriented Ministry; and finally, the practical problems of mutual recognition of Ministries, including psychological, canonical, and administrative factors.

D. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

It goes without saying that the lists below include only a small portion of the vast material available. Care has been taken to ensure that the majority of the books listed are readily available. We hope that the language problem will not be too great an obstacle.

Most of the books listed under II. contain bibliographies of their own.

I.

Starting in 1973, Lutheran churches throughout the world undertook a study on "The Identity of the Church and its Service to the Whole Human Being" (ecclesiology studies).

Towards the end of the international process 22 member churches and five national committees representing an additional 24 member churches had been involved in 35 study projects. These projects covered a large variety of topics.

In June 1975, the Commission on Studies of the Lutheran World Federation decided to establish a special team to review the self-studies which the churches participating in the ecclesiology studies had conducted.

In 1977, the LWF published the reports on the self-study projects and the review of this group as Volumes I and II of *The Identity of the Church and its Service to the Whole Human Being*.

Useful material for the self-studies on ministry will especially be found in Volume II: *Summary - Analysis - Interpretation*. Chapter VIII (pp. 181-213) deals with "Participation: Internal Life and Work". The chapter discusses such issues as:

- the relationship between the pastoral office, church workers and the laity;
- the church as an institution and movements within the church;
- the local church and the churches;
- key issues of participation.

As a contribution to the ecclesiology and identity studies the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg in 1977 published a report entitled *Lutheran Identity: Final Report of the Study Project "The Identity of the Lutheran Churches in the Context of the Challenges of our Time"*.

Particularly relevant for the understanding of the ministry are paragraphs 25-53 (pp. 19-27).

II.

"The Augsburg Confession in Ecumenical Perspective; With Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Orthodox, Reformed, and Roman Catholic Contributions", ed. by Harding Meyer, *LWF Report* 6/7, 1979.

This 190-page report from an ecumenical consultation also includes the discussions that took place after each paper.

Brekke, Milo L., Strommen, Merton P., Williams, Dorothy, *Ten Faces of Ministry; Perspectives on Pastoral and Congregational Effectiveness Based on a Survey of 5000 Lutherans*, Minneapolis, 1979.

"... not only reports and reflects on the survey results but offers practical suggestions, guidelines and checklists to help ... determine priorities and develop a more effective gospel ministry".

von Campenhausen, Hans, Freiherr von, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries*, transl. by J.A. Baker, London, 1969.

The topics dealt with include: the authority of Jesus, the apostles, the apostolic authority, and the freedom of the congregation in Paul, Spirit and authority in the Pauline congregations, the elders and the emergence of an authority of ministry, the power of the keys.

Carlson, Edgar M., "The Doctrine of the Ministry", *The Lutheran Quarterly* XV, February 1963, pp. 118ff.

An easy-to-read first introduction to the theology of ministry. A number of current topics, e.g., the differentiation of ministry, are not treated. 14 pages.

Conzelmann, Hans, *History of Primitive Christianity*, transl. by John E. Steely, London, 1973.

A standard work of around 200 pages. The chronological narrative has chapters on each period with a survey of the inner life of the church and its structures.

Cooke, Bernard, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments, History and Theology*, Philadelphia, 1976.

One of the most recent truly comprehensive works on the subject. Includes material both

on historical development and on dogmatic reflection. 677 pages.

Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church? Studies in the Development and Definition of the Office of Church Leadership, ed. by Ivar Asheim and Victor R. Gold, Philadelphia, 1961.

This volume includes contributions by ten authors and offers a survey both of church history and of the Lutheran world.

Eucharist and Ministry, Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV, ed. by Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy, Minneapolis, 1979.

This volume includes the joint Lutheran - Roman Catholic statement on ministry following the conversations in the US as well as a number of articles on ministry in the New Testament, in church history and in the Lutheran confessions.

Frauen auf neuen Wegen; Studien und Problembereichte zur Situation der Frauen in Gesellschaft und Kirche, Volume 3 in the project "Women as Innovative Groups", ed. by Gerta Scharffenorth, Gudrun Diestel and Niels Hasselmann, Gelnhausen/Berlin, Stein/Mfr., 1978.

This comprehensive volume contains theological studies, investigations of church practices, studies in history, reference material concerning pedagogics and didactics, and studies on the role of the housewife in society.

Goppel, Leonhard, "The Ministry in the Lutheran Confessions and in the New Testament", *Lutheran World* XI, 1964, pp. 409-426.

A short article discussing ministry in the confessions and in the New Testament. More difficult than Carlson above, but still easily accessible. The same volume contains several other articles on ministry.

LWF International Consultation for Women, Colombo, 1976,
and

LWF European Consultation for Women, Vienna, 1979.

Documentation from these consultations can be obtained through the LWF Women's Desk. The material includes lectures, case studies, group reports, recommendations, etc.

Le ministère et les ministères selon le NT. Dossier exégétique et réflexion théologique, ed. by Jean Delorme, Paris, 1974.

A Roman Catholic standard work on the New Testament. The section containing theological reflection has chapters on diversity and unity in ministries according to the New Testament, "ministries and the structure of the church", etc.

Persson, Per Erik, *Kyrkans ämbete som Kristus-representation* (*Studia Theologica Lundensis* 20), Lund, 1961.

A critical analysis of recent trends in the theology of ministry. Sections on Roman Catholic and Lutheran theories of the ministry of the church as a representation.

Prenter Regin, *Kirkens embede* (*Acta Jutlandica XXXVII: Teologisk serie 10*), Aarhus/Copenhagen, 1965.

"An attempt at a dogmatics of the ministry of the church starting from a Lutheran standpoint." A comprehensive volume with material on liturgy, church history, the confessions, ordination, etc.

Schlink, Edmund, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, transl. by Paul F. Koehneke and Herbert J.A. Boumann, Philadelphia, 1961.

Another comprehensive standard work. Especially relevant for the understanding of ministry are Chapter VI (The Church) and Chapter VIII (Civil and Ecclesiastical Government).

Schweizer, Eduard, *Church Order in the New Testament*, transl. by Frank Clarke (*Studies in Biblical Theology*/32), London, 1961.

The chronological narrative starts with Jesus and finishes with the Apostolic fathers. Sections both on the many-sidedness and the unity of the New Testament congregation.

Women and Worship, Rooted in the New Creation, ed. by Constance F. Parvey, Lutheran World Ministries, New York, 1977.

Final report from a consultation with 74 women participants from 11 countries, held in Wisconsin in April 1977. The consultation was sponsored by Lutheran World Ministries and the Lutheran World Federation.

